

THE TIMES



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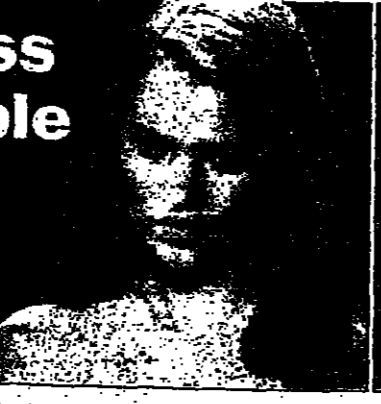
MONDAY DECEMBER 28 1998

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Grey, girliness and the humble cardie

LISA ARMSTRONG ON THE RETURN OF GLAMOUR

FASHION '98 page 16



ANNA BLUNDY

Christmas with the Russian mafia

page 20



18 PAGES OF SPORT

BLINDING DATES

4-PAGE 1999 SPORTS FIXTURES CALENDAR

pages 35, 38



Third way politics for Europe Mandelson to be Blair's German link

By PHILIP WEBSTER POLITICAL EDITOR

TONY BLAIR has asked Peter Mandelson to operate as his special envoy in building a strong political alliance with Germany...

In the immediate aftermath of his dramatic departure from the Government last week, the Prime Minister told the fallen Trade Secretary that he wanted him to continue as British chairman of the Anglo-German working group...

Mr Blair's desire to keep Mr Mandelson involved in European affairs emerged as the Prime Minister broke his silence over the resignation and as the Conservatives mounted a fresh offensive in the wake of new allegations in Sunday newspapers...

The Conservatives demanded a full inquiry into allegations, denied by Treasury sources, that Geoffrey Robinson, the former Paymaster General, had offered loans to other ministers...

Mr Mandelson, with Bodo Hombach, Herr Schröder's campaign chief in the German election and now his Chancellor's minister, is to work on the politics of the 'Third Way'. Mr Mandelson agreed to continue doing the job as a backbencher at a meeting with Mr Blair at Chequers last Wednesday night only hours after he had announced his resignation...

He stayed the night at the Prime Minister's country residence after Mr Blair and his wife Cherie had personally consoled him over the sudden end of his ministerial career. That move shows that their friendship remains strong despite the traumatic events of last week, when Mr Blair and Mr Mandelson agreed that he had to leave the Government over his £373,000 loan from Mr Robinson...

It was assumed that his role heading the Anglo-German mission would have to end as well. But because it is essentially a political job drawing on a



Schröder shares centre-left policies with Labour

perspective about it. He said that Mr Mandelson's resignation was a personal tragedy...

Mr Blair was pressed over why he had not asked Mr Mandelson, whom he has described as a personal friend, how he could afford such an expensive new house...

"I really don't go round asking my Cabinet members how they paid for their house and what they did," he said. "I've never been to the particular house myself..."

Amid a welter of allegations in the Sunday papers, Mr Mandelson confirmed a report that he had accepted a free flight in the private jet of Linda Wachner, an American underwear millionaire, and failed to declare it to Parliament...

Mr Mandelson's spokesman said the trip was undertaken in "a personal capacity" and was not declared in the Register of Members' Interests because it was "nothing to do with his work at the DTI"...

Peter Lilley, the deputy Tory leader, wrote to Richard Wilson, the Cabinet Secretary, asking him to investigate how many ministers had been offered loans by Mr Robinson. This followed reports - fiercely denied as "baseless and malicious" by Treasury sources - suggesting that he had offered three more ministers loans to help them move home to central London...

Michael Howard, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, demanded to know to what extent Mr Robinson had "bankrolled" Gordon Brown's office when Labour was in Opposition...

The Chancellor has called his one-time close friend at least five times since his departure from office and even helped him draft his resignation letter...

Blair interview, page 2 Brown's man, page 8 Free flights, page 9 Leading article, page 21



Sally Greig: it is thought that she may have become disorientated after leaving Christmas party in hotel

Missing teenager's body found in field of snow

By GILLIAN HARRIS SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

THE BODY OF Sally Greig, the teenager who disappeared after an office Christmas party five days ago, was discovered in a snowy field yesterday. It is believed that she died from hypothermia...

Sally, 18, is thought to have become disorientated after walking several miles in freezing temperatures in search of a taxi to take her home. She was dressed in only lightweight clothes with no coat...

Detectives who have been hunting for Sally since her parents raised the alarm when she failed to arrive at their home on Christmas Eve confirmed the identity of the body last night. Sally was spotted by the crew of an RAF helicopter on a farm near Perth, three miles from the hotel where the party was held. Police are not looking for anyone else in connection with her death...

It emerged yesterday that a passing motorist spoke to Sally as she wandered along a country lane close to Newbigging Farm, where the body was found, at around 12.30 am on Christmas Eve. The driver, whose family was also in the car, stopped to ask the teenage dental assistant if she was alright. He expressed concern that she was out on her own so late at night...

After a short discussion the driver and his family drove on, leaving Sally to continue her walk. Later the driver told police that Sally, who was wearing a lightweight black suit and no coat, appeared disorientated and confused. As she was not a heavy drinker and did not take drugs, police now believe that she may have been displaying early symptoms of hypothermia...

Sally left her office party in the Huntingtower Hotel three miles from Perth city centre at about 11.30pm. She told her colleagues from the Cherrybank Dental Surgery that she was going to hail a taxi and might go on to the Jazz Bank nightclub. Having failed to persuade anyone to accompany her, Sally left the hotel alone...

It is believed that she walked down the winding driveway and set off in the wrong direction. The driver who saw her stumbling along the unlit road said she was heading away from Perth towards open countryside. The temperature had dropped below freezing and there was a strong easterly wind. Snow started falling shortly after midnight...

Sally, who shared a flat with her best friend, Continued on page 2, col 8

INSIDE

Holiday task for pensions staff

Pension companies called in extra staff over the holiday weekend as they struggled to compensate victims of personal pensions mis-selling before the Thursday deadline. But 100 small independent financial advisers are expected to miss the deadline because they were unable to clear the backlog in time...

Gales kill four

At least four people were killed and another is missing after Christmas storms with winds gusting up to 100 mph battered Britain and Ireland. As electricity companies struggled to re-connect thousands of homes, forecasters warned that further gales are likely to hit western areas from tomorrow. Roads were closed, trees uprooted and rail services badly affected... Page 3

Euro faultlines

The launch of the euro on New Year's Day will harness the economics of 11 nations to rival the power of the US. But there are many pitfalls on the path to a thriving Euroland. Charles Bremner begins a new series on Faultlines of the New Europe... Page 13

Saracens crash

Saracens, the egg holders and one of the favourites for this year's championship, lost 24-7 at home to Edinburgh in one of the season's main upsets in rugby's Premiership. Wasps maintained their recent good form by beating Gloucester 23-7... Page 34

Victoria-Brown love letters found

By GILLIAN HARRIS

A HIDDEN cache of love letters exchanged between Queen Victoria and John Brown, her gamekeeper, which reveal the depths of their intimate friendship has been uncovered in the attic of a house on Royal Deeside. The hoard, which includes souvenirs and private photographs of the couple taken at the Balmoral estate and at Osborne, the Queen's home on the Isle of Wight, has been stored for many years in a trunk belonging to one of Brown's descendants...

Mr Rae said: "Until then the existence of the letters and mementoes had been kept secret. But the woman's sister told us what was still kept in the attic of her home..." Mr Rae and Mr Brooks spent several months establishing the authenticity of the hoard. "We were, to say the least, cynical and took it with a pinch of salt. But when we visited the family on Royal Deeside we were amazed at what we found..." "All the letters and photographs had been kept by the family for all these years. We sat and read all the correspondence between Victoria and Brown and there is no doubt in my mind they were written by two people who were very, very close and shared an intimate friendship. "We even found a Valentine card from Queen Victoria... Continued on page 2, col 8



Queen Victoria with her intimate friend, John Brown

Straw 'on alert' for millennium

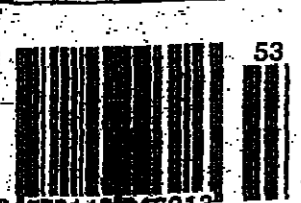
By VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

JACK STRAW has been told that, as Home Secretary, he must stay in London during next year's millennium celebrations in case of a serious breakdown in public order or a national emergency. Officials have given him a warning that prolonged festivities and possible problems connected with the millennium computer bug could trigger a domestic crisis. It has been agreed by the Cabinet that it will be Mr Straw's job to ensure the safety of citizens and, in the event of disruption to vital services, he will activate the Cabinet Office's crisis control centre...

The Civil Contingency Committee - known in Whitehall as the "Triple C" and chaired by Mr Straw - would monitor any problems, and decide on the call-out of troops and their movements as well as distribution of a central supply. The senior Whitehall official confirmed that Mr Straw Queen at Dawn, page 10

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'Mandelson paying dearly for his error'

Tony Blair talks to Eddie Mair about Labour's most arduous week in office

TONY BLAIR spoke yesterday of the "personal tragedy" of Peter Mandelson's resignation from the Cabinet, saying that he was an honourable man who had paid dearly for an error of judgment. The following are edited extracts of his interview with Eddie Mair for the BBC Radio 4 programme *Broadcasting House*.

EM: Let us start with Peter Mandelson then. Did he do anything wrong?

TB: Yes, he made a mistake he did something wrong and he paid a very heavy price for it.

EM: What did he do wrong?

TB: What was wrong was not disclosing, even though there was no actual conflict of interest because he did insulate himself from the Robinson inquiry. He should have disclosed the details of the arrangement with Geoffrey Robinson and I think that was a misjudgment, and it is a tragedy for him personally.

EM: Was the loan itself wrong?

TB: I think it was not a wise thing to have entered into. But on the other hand I think what was actually wrong was when the details of it were known to him and there was a DTI inquiry going on, and even though he did in fact absent himself from it completely, nonetheless it would have been wiser to have disclosed it.

EM: When did you find out that the loan had been made?

TB: I only found out about it two or three days before Peter resigned, and on Wednesday, December 17th, is that right?

TB: Well, I can't remember... EM: It was the Thursday.

TB: It was the same day that I made the statement in the House of Commons on the Gulf, and obviously I was primarily concerned with the air strikes at the time but nonetheless there it is. What is impor-

tant now is to move on. It is not the end of the world.

EM: Why didn't you sack him on the 17th?

TB: I was dealing with, as I say, the air strikes over the Gulf, but the other thing that I wanted to be sure of, because this would have been very serious, is if in fact he hadn't insulated himself from the inquiry into Geoffrey Robinson's affairs and as a matter of fact he had done that.

EM: What I want to establish is why it was a resigning matter last Wednesday it wasn't a resigning matter on the afternoon of, or the evening, of the 17th when you knew what was going on?

TB: Well it is not that it wasn't a resigning matter. As I say I had other things that were preoccupying me.

EM: Did you make an error in judgment in not either getting rid of him or asking him to go sooner?

TB: I hope I didn't do that. I think we probably came to a conclusion about this rather quicker than most people do over these things. But, it is obviously a very serious matter for someone to decide to resign and Peter took the decision and I think it was the right decision and he did it, I think, very honourably.

EM: It seems that it was Wednesday's press coverage, Wednesday's press, Wednesday's terrible headlines on Mr Mandelson which actually pushed you and him over the edge.

TB: No that is not right actually.

EM: If I can clarify the point I was trying to make, on the 17th when you were in possession of all the facts of this case

which we knew later on the 18th, on the 19th, on the 20th, on the 21st and on the 22nd none of this was a resigning matter, you didn't see fit to sack him for any of that. Only on the 23rd when the newspapers really turned, the newspaper made their judgment on Mr Mandelson did you both decide it was time to end it?

TB: No, and what I am saying to is, I mean, you know you are perfectly entitled to say well, you know that is what you should have been focusing on all the time, but actually what I was focusing on primarily on the Thursday and the Friday and the Saturday, and to an extent on the Sunday and Monday was the fact that I had just sent British servicemen and women into fight and, I also at the time, because I had been told about this I wanted to have full inquiries made so that I knew all the facts and exactly what was happening. And I didn't know all the facts on the Thursday actually because I was more interested on concentrating on the Gulf. So if the point that you want to make is I could have come to the conclusion quicker, well by all means make that point but I think we came to it pretty quickly.

EM: You don't think you dithered?

TB: I certainly don't think that. I think if you look at the history of these types of things we acted pretty quickly.

EM: William Hague sacked Lord Cranborne very quickly.

TB: I don't really think I would want to be in that position with my leader in the House of Lords but anyway.

EM: Are you privately glad that at the back of your mind

that Mr Mandelson has gone since so many people in the Labour Party seem to dislike him so much. And does it still matter whether the Labour Party loves him?

TB: I think it matters that the Labour Party is new Labour. That is important and that will carry on and it is bigger than any individual and the fact that you put in people like Steve Byers and Alan Millburn and John Denham into the positions, all of whom are total supporters of the Labour Party and the policies and programme we have, and there is, yes, there will be a certain number of people who will be foolish enough to think that Peter's going means that somehow that there is some blow to the project of new Labour. That goes on. I mean we got elected as new Labour, we will govern as new Labour.

EM: If we accept that you were preoccupied with Britain at war, let me put this to you. If a friend of mine earning £4,000 per year was buying a house for £75,000 - now this is a man that you described as personal friend, closest of political colleagues - if a friend of mine had been in that position I would have taken him to one side and said, "Nice place, where did you get the money? Why didn't you ask him that?"

TB: Well, Eddie, I really don't go around asking my Cabinet members how they paid for their house and what they did and all the rest of it. I have never been to the particular house myself. You know I have an awful lot that comes across my desk and there are big big questions and I don't go charging round asking people how they pay for things.

EM: This was before you were in power of course?

TB: Yes, but I mean I haven't actually been to the house and I don't run a sort of Estate Agents...

EM: Personal friend - close

'I don't go asking people how they pay for things'



Tony Blair: he says that the Government must move on from the Mandelson affair

Victoria's love letters discovered

Continued from page 1
which read: "Do my dear friend JB from his best friend VR."

The family allowed the filmmakers to feature the Valentines card in Mrs Brown and make use of material gleaned from the letters as background to the plot. "But we have given them an assurance that we will respect the secret of what is in the letters and where they are kept," said Mr. Rae.

The family has decided nothing will be made public while the present members of the royal family, particularly the Queen Mother, are still alive.

It is believed that some of the mementoes were sold by Sotheby's in September, including a mourning brooch commissioned by Queen Victoria after her gamekeeper's death in 1832 and presented to his family a year later.

A spokesman for Sotheby's said: "The John Brown collection was sold anonymously by a Scottish descendant and anonymity was a condition of sale."

Teenager's body found

Continued from page 1
Heather Sharp, was expected at her parents' sandstone villa in the village of Aberargie by lunchtime on Christmas Eve to spend the holiday with her brother Scott, 17, and sister Joanne, 13. When she failed to show up, her parents called the police.

Her disappearance sparked a major police hunt. Dozens of officers and mountain rescue teams searched the countryside surrounding the Huntingtower Hotel and dragged the River Tay without success. Their search was hampered

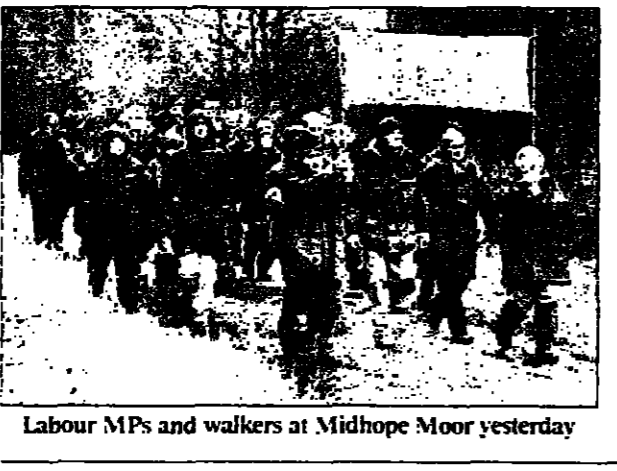


by heavy rain and gale force winds. Meanwhile the police studied footage from CCTV cameras in Perth city centre to determine whether Sally reached the Jazz Bank nightclub.

On Boxing Day, Sally's parents, Brian and Barbara, made an impassioned appeal for their elder daughter to get in touch. They insisted that Sally, who telephoned her mother every day, would not vanish without explanation and begged anyone with any information to contact the police.

Last night they were being comforted by relatives.

Meacher's battle for right to roam marches on



Labour MPs and walkers at Midhope Moor yesterday

BY JILL SHERRMAN
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR'S long-running battle with country landowners will reopen next month with renewed moves by ministers to bring in "right to roam" laws.

Ministers believe that legislation, rather than voluntary agreement, is the only way to open the countryside to ramblers. Yesterday Labour MPs increased pressure on the Government for action at a rally on the edge of Midhope Moor, outside Sheffield.

A year ago Tony Blair, fearing a backlash from landowners, decided to defer Michael Meacher's initial paper proposing a right-to-roam law. He favoured voluntary deals, but other min-

isters now argue that such agreements are unlikely to work.

Mr Meacher, the Environment Minister, is expected to announce proposals in the new year for legal measures to ensure that landowners permanently open 3.50 million acres of heath, down, mountain, moorland and registered common land on a permanent basis. His move follows a survey by the Country Landowners' Association, which estimated that only 600,000 acres would be opened voluntarily.

Labour MPs at yesterday's rally backed the need for legislation. One of them, Gordon Prentice, MP for Pendle, is trying to introduce a Private Member's Bill on the freedom to roam. Another, Andrew Bennett, president of

the Ramblers' Association and chairman of the Commons Environment Select Committee, said: "In the past 50 years the amount of land people can walk over has been much reduced. Even the small handful of voluntary access agreements have done little more than give a legal right to walk on land that was open to the public by tradition anyway."

Mr Meacher concedes that he will have to provide exemptions for the breeding and shooting seasons for game. In addition he will propose that landowners can have sole use of their land on "family days". Some land might also be closed for conservation and land management reasons. In an attempt to appease the countryside lob-

by, he will also suggest that the laws are introduced with agreements between landowners and councils.

But Mr Meacher may still have to persuade the Prime Minister to back a proposal that is bound to inflame the simmering row between the countryside groups and the Government: Mr Blair's wary of prompting demonstrations such as the countryside protest in London in March, but he may be more amenable to the proposal once hereditary peers are abolished.

Meacher also points out that the consultation paper made clear that laws would be introduced if voluntary agreements did not work.

the ramblers' Association and chairman of the Commons Environment Select Committee, said: "In the past 50 years the amount of land people can walk over has been much reduced. Even the small handful of voluntary access agreements have done little more than give a legal right to walk on land that was open to the public by tradition anyway."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

School fighting fund

School governors as well as teachers are to be offered self-defence training from a £22 million fund announced by the Government today to improve school security. The money represents the final phase of a three-year programme established after the death of Philip Lawrence, the London headmaster murdered in a gang incident outside his school.

Teachers have already been issued with security guidelines. Most of the money allocated in the first two years of the programme has been spent on measures such as extra fencing, closed-circuit television and keypad entry systems. Security training for teachers has been included, but the programme is now to be extended to governors.

Family hurt in fire

A pregnant woman was in intensive care last night after she, her husband and four young daughters narrowly escaped a fire that gutted the family home. Julie Harvey, 32, and her husband Graham, 35, and their children had been asleep at home in Gatley, near Stockport, when the fire broke out in the early hours of Boxing Day. Mr Harvey and the children were also in hospital. A fireman and a neighbour who came to help were slightly hurt.

Couple found dead

Three children discovered the bodies of their mother, 30, and her boyfriend, 31, at their home yesterday. The two girls and a boy, who are all of primary school age, found the two bodies when they woke up and went downstairs at their home in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. The children ran to the house of a neighbour, who called the police. A post-mortem examination is to be carried out today.

Parents to search island

The parents of Richey Edwards, the Manic Street Preachers musician, are to visit Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands after reports that he was seen there. Graham and Sherry Edwards were told that a British-born barmaid saw their son, who disappeared almost four years ago, in a bar. The man ran off when asked about his identity. Mr Edwards said: "There was something about the sighting that makes us think it could be him."

Murder inquiry

Police were last night questioning a man over the murder of a retired pharmacist who was beaten and stabbed to death before his home was set alight. The body of John Evans was found in his gutted bungalow in Houghton-le-Spring, near Wakefield, early on Christmas Day. Detectives said that Evans had been "savagely" beaten with a blunt object, possibly a fire extinguisher.

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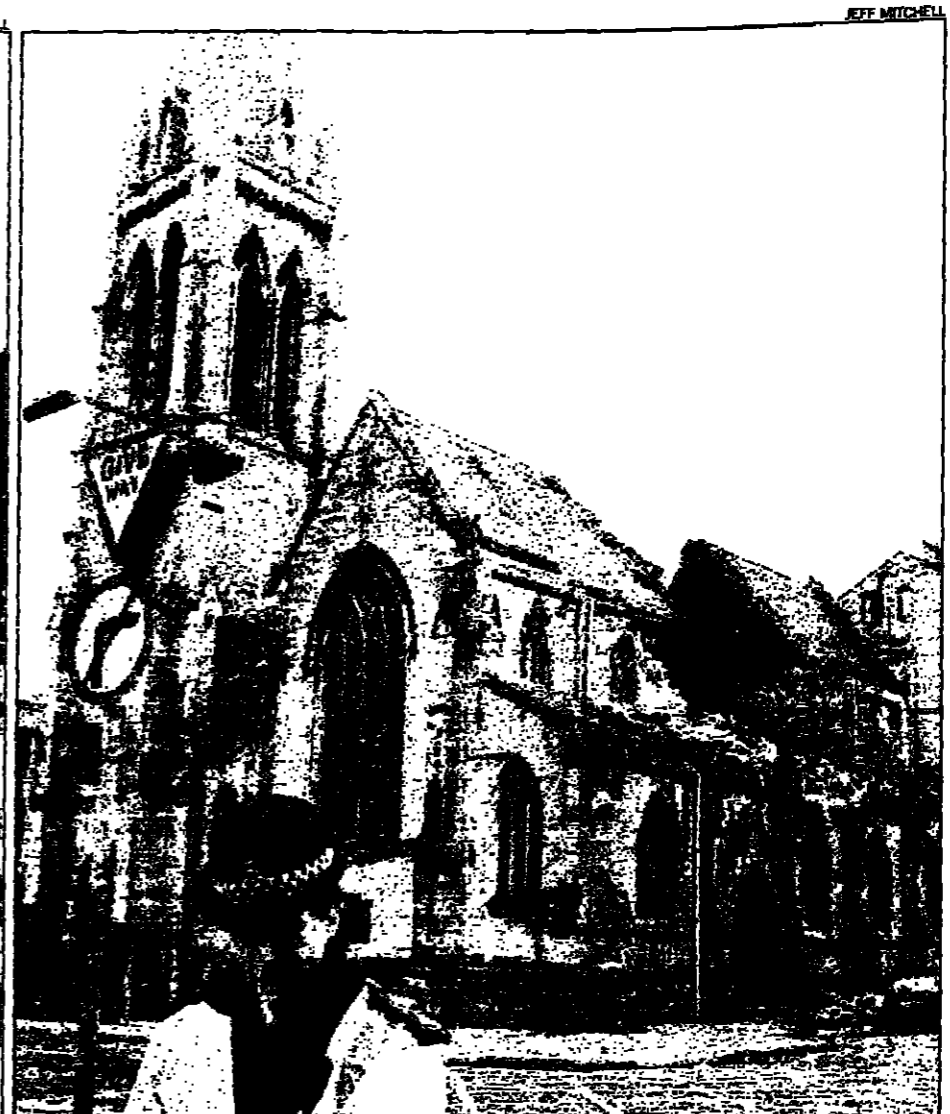
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pure wool suits	£299.00	£149.00

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Storms bring death and destruction



Children on the remains of a factory roof that was blown against houses in East Belfast, and a police officer outside a church whose spire collapsed when the high winds struck Glasgow city centre

Five feared dead as gales sweep Britain

By HANNAH BETTS

AT LEAST four people were killed and another is believed drowned after Christmas storms with winds gusting up to 100mph battered Britain and Ireland. As electricity companies struggled to reconnect thousands of homes left without power, forecasters said that further gales were likely to hit western areas tomorrow.

Roads were closed, trees uprooted and rail services badly affected by the storm, which claimed its youngest victim on Boxing Day. Mark Flaxley, aged 5, was thrown from his mother's car after it hit a branch and collided with an oncoming vehicle near Wrexham. Gillian Hudley, from Whitechurch, Shropshire, broke her collarbone, but her two other children, and the occupants of the second car, escaped major injury.

In the Irish Republic, Michael Joyce, aged 26, was killed when a falling tree crushed his car near the village of Maam Cross, in the Connemara region of Co Galway. His girlfriend, who was also in the car, escaped unharmed.

In Northern Ireland, a 24-year-old driver died early

yesterday morning when he crashed into a tree that had blown across the Belfast Road in Cromber. A number of people needed treatment for minor injuries after winds lifted the roof off a three-storey block of flats in Holywood, Co Down, and a factory collapsed in East Belfast.

In Ashburton, Devon, Paul Witt, 44, is believed to have drowned on Boxing Day after being swept away whilst inspecting flood damage at the bottom of his garden. The body of a man was found in the swollen River Ashburton yesterday morning, but has not been formally identified. Police have called off their search for Mr Witt, a single man who lived with his parents.

In Brighton, a man aged 28 was missing, presumed dead, after being swept out to sea near the Palace Pier. The man, from Tonbridge, Kent, braved 30ft waves and winds of 70mph to take a Boxing Day swim. The man's girlfriend and her son watched in horror as he was torn away from the shore. After an initial helicopter sighting, the search for the body has not been resumed.

Scotland suffered its highest winds for 30 years. A month-old baby escaped unharmed when a 40ft metal roof crashed through her bedroom ceiling and landed close to the crib where she was sleeping at Grangemouth, Stirlingshire, and a girl aged 16, Louise Bennett, was in a serious condition in hospital after being struck by a chimney by a chimney that blew off a house in Rothsay on the Isle of Bute.

Many roads throughout Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic remained closed owing to flooding, snow or fallen trees and AA Roadwatch urged drivers to travel only if their journey was "absolutely vital".

A spokesman at the Met Office headquarters in Bracknell said that the storms were no worse than normal for the time of the year: "This is the sort of thing we expect. It may seem dramatic, but it's just a winter storm."

The forecast for the coming week threatens more unsettled weather with high winds and showers across several parts of the country.

Forecast, page 24

Studious prince may take degree at Trinity

By VALERIE ELLIOTT

PRINCE WILLIAM looks set to follow his father, the Prince of Wales, to Trinity College, Cambridge.

Royal insiders last night confirmed that the choice of Trinity for Prince William was "a strong possibility" although much would depend on his A-level studies in English, geography and history of art. A final decision will be made over the summer.

One source said: "There is no question that the Prince is able, and well equipped for an Oxbridge college. He seems to be something of an academic, but everything depends on his work and no final decisions have been taken."

The Prince has just completed the first term of his sixth form studies and must decide his options before entering his final year at Eton in September. It was also hinted last night that the Prince was likely to take a gap year, probably on voluntary service overseas.

There was also speculation that he might depart from royal tradition and join the diplomatic service after graduation rather than follow his father by accepting a commission in the Royal Navy.

If the Prince attends Trinity it will be something of a disappointment to the Spencer family. Diana, Princess of Wales, had hoped he would go to Oxford like her brother, Earl Spencer.

Branson already planning fifth balloon attempt

By HELEN RUMBLOW

EVEN while counting his losses on his latest failure to circumnavigate the world by balloon, Richard Branson was celebrating Christmas by planning another attempt, it emerged yesterday.

Although he has lost both the capsule of the *ICO Global Challenger* and his vital address book at the bottom of the Pacific, he said last night that he may go again.

However, the Chinese are still so angered by his team's defiance of their conditions for crossing their airspace they have withdrawn permission for his seven rivals.

Mr Branson has also lost a £180,000 bet at 10-1 he placed with bookmakers that he would succeed in the circumnavigation. "I thought it would be an easy way of mak-

ing money for our charitable foundation," he said.

Mr Branson and Steve Fossett have left co-pilot Per Lindstrand in Hawaii searching for the sunken balloon, but before dropping Mr Fossett off in Colorado they discussed the possibility of another balloon trip this summer.

"We believe it must have sunk which is very sad, because on board are wonderful videos we took of the Himalayas, my diaries, and my address book of 15 years which of course I haven't copied out."

A fifth attempt by Mr Branson would take the southern hemisphere route that won Mr Fossett the long-distance ballooning record in August.

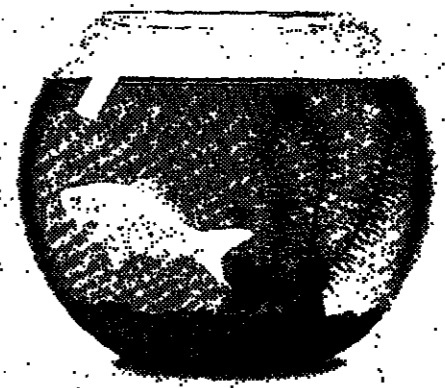
"This doesn't necessarily mean we can't try again. We were talking about it over Christmas," he said. "The southern route has its own kind of problems but not the political headaches of the northern route that are very difficult to overcome."

While on his own island of Necker he is now assessing the damage from setting down his balloon 8,000 miles short of its goal on Christmas Day. He was also planning ways of appealing China, which he managed to cross illegally with much help from that address book of influential friends such as Sir Edward Heath.



Branson lost £180,000 bet he would make it

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Christmas sales put stores back in business

AFTER days of ominously slow trade in the lead-up to Christmas, the big retailers were well and truly back in business yesterday.

Leading the rush to slash post-Christmas prices was a newcomer to the practice, Marks & Spencer, whose sales have hitherto been low-profile and rather shamefaced affairs. This year M&S announced its first fall in profits for ten years, and was at the forefront of the leading stores that began their clearance sales at noon. Also uncharacteristic was their decision to advertise the sale extensively on television.

Directors of Marks & Spencer used to say: "We hate sales. Every red sticker represents one of our mistakes." Mistakes this year have evidently been legion, because the flagship Oxford Street stores have floors full of reductions. In M&S's Marble Arch shop there were long queues to pay.

Marks & Spencer leads the rush to cut prices after a sluggish week, reports Robin Young

and customers were placated by boiled sweets supplied by staff.

There were almost equally long queues for exchanges and refunds, but the flow of returned Christmas presents was not as large as the management had feared. Areas large enough to accommodate a dozen display islands had been cleared and roped off for refund counters, but remained empty.

The M&S Pantheon store

near Oxford Circus was relatively quiet. Shoppers in the area seemed to be concentrating on the traditional sales by Debenhams, Dickins & Jones, Liberty, Hamley's toy shop, Jaeger and Austin Reed. Each of those establishments were besieged by several hundred shoppers by 11.30am, and such was the congestion on the pavements that both Dickins & Jones and Liberty opened their doors well in advance of their advertised midday openings. Pipers played to entertain the crowd and Liberty gave children balloons promoting their sale.

At Selfridges in Oxford Street, the queue for the car park caused a large traffic jam that blocked streets up to half a mile away. Inside the store, a steel band played as crowds of shoppers milled around the escalators.

"This store has been dead in the weeks up to Christmas,"



Shoppers search for bargains in Marks & Spencer yesterday. The chain swallowed its price and joined other major retailers in holding a big sale

said one saleswoman. "But people seem to be making up for it a bit now."

This year there were none of the "star buys" of the past - individual high-priced items heavily discounted to attract overnight queues and to provoke desperate races to the appropriate department. Instead, the emphasis was on comprehensive across-the-board reductions. Many stores, including Debenhams, Dickins & Jones, DH Evans, Bhs and Liberty, opted not to

advertise individual reductions in their windows, but to display posters promising "massive reductions", "good deals in every department", or simply a "half-price sale".

At least 100,000 shoppers poured into the Thurrock Lake-

side shopping centre in Essex prompting police to issue an urgent lunchtime message pleading with people to stay away from the 326-store complex.

Inspector Alan Jelley, of Brentwood police, said at the

time: "All the car parks are full and if people continue to pile in from the old A13 there could be massive congestion problems."

"This is the busiest weekend of the year and there could be gridlock."

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Bodies verified as Chechnya murder victims

FOUR headless bodies found in Chechnya on Christmas Day are those of three British men and their New Zealand colleague murdered by kidnappers, British diplomats said yesterday.

A spokesman for the British Embassy said that contact had been made with authorities in the breakaway Russian republic. He said: "We have been in touch with the medical people in Chechnya. They have said the bodies are ours, and we have accepted this."

The spokesman added that arrangements were under way to return the men's remains to their home countries as soon as possible.

The bodies of Darren Hickey, Rudolf Pitschi and Peter Kennedy, along with that of the New Zealander Stanley Shaw, were discovered late on Christmas Day on the outskirts of Grozny, the Chechen capital. The severed heads of the four telecommunications workers were found by a roadside on December 8. The men had been captured at the beginning of October by armed bandits who demanded a large ransom for their safe release. They were executed by their captors, apparently following a bungled attempt to free them.

The embassy spokesman said that it was impossible to fly the Britons' remains direct-

Pensioner dies after savings are stolen

A DEAF, blind pensioner died on Christmas Day, two weeks after a thief stole £30 that she had saved to buy presents.

It was the third time in just over a year that thieves had targeted Eileen Harvey, 93, at her home in Fratton, Portsmouth. A man distracted her by taking her into the garden to look at a wall which he said needed repairing, while a small boy went to her lounge and emptied her handbag.

After the theft, she said: "I felt sorry for them because it was pouring with rain and I let them in. It has upset me no end." Mrs Harvey, a former foreman, had lived in the same house for more than 60 years. She died at a friend's home where she had gone to stay over the holiday.

Police believe that the same man took £800 from Mrs Harvey in a similar incident in May. She was also burgled late last year. A Hampshire Police spokesman said: "We were very sad to hear of her death although we do not believe there was any direct link to the burglary. We are asking anyone who has any information to contact us."

The wanted man is described as white, aged about 40, between 5ft and 5ft 6in tall, with short, neat, dark hair. He was slim, and wearing a green sweater and matching trousers.

Chauvinis beat talking in ratings

THE Duke of Hamilton, Scotland's premier peer and one of the country's richest men, has asked for lottery cash to restore his seat.

Lennoxlove Castle in East Lothian is under attack from dry rot, and the duke, the Hereditary Keeper of Holyroodhouse, wants the lottery fund to pay for his roof repairs.

Yesterday he was accused by critics of living up to his family motto of "Never Be Hind". But despite selling a family portrait of Queen Elizabeth I for £140,000 recently, the duke says that he is too hard up to live in his 15th-century castle, which has strong associations with Mary Queen of Scots. "We do not want to see Lennoxlove destroyed," he said. "It should be used as an educational tool to bring history alive."

The duke believes that many aristocrats now find their family seats a burden. He said: "There is no way private individuals could afford to run them. Lennoxlove is a charity: if these homes were not charities they would all fall down. This is an historic house open to the public. We live in a farmhouse - it's a bit cheaper."

Earlier this year, there was uproar when it was revealed that one of the Duke's neighbours, the Earl of Rosebery, had applied for lottery funding to restore his palace at Dalmeny House.

THE TIMES MONDAY DECEMBER 28 1998

US g

£2bn contract offer to build Navy's aircraft carrier of the future, reports Michael Evans

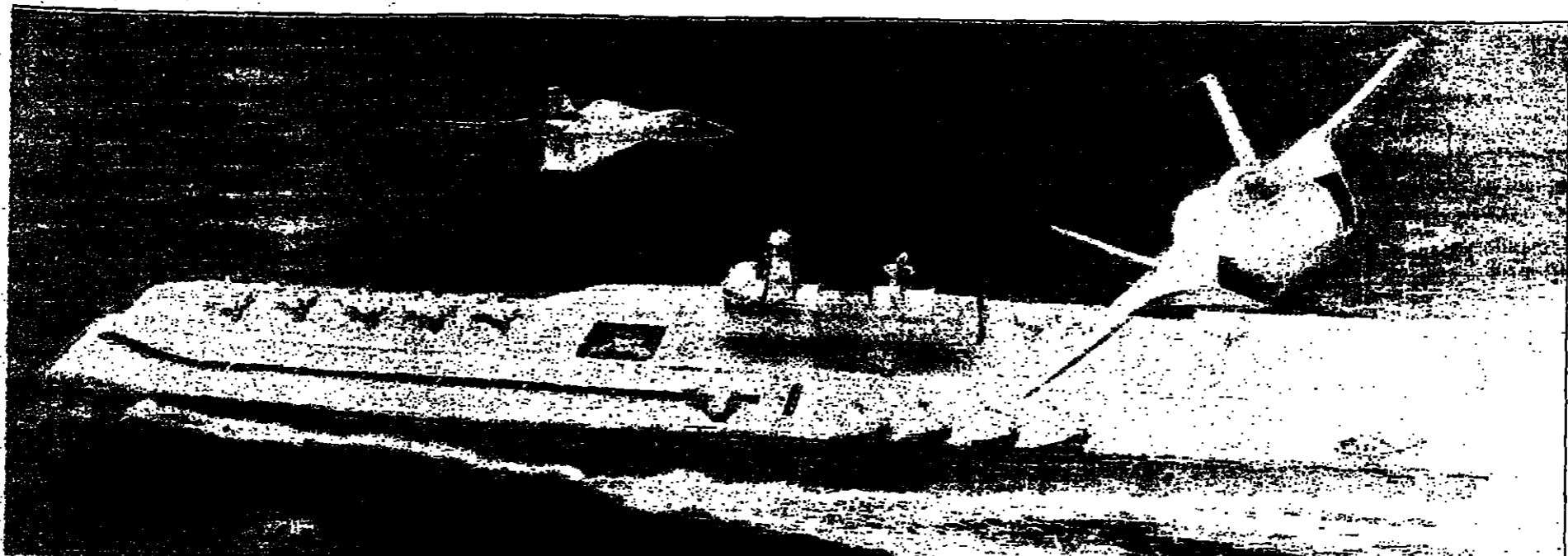
THE design of the Navy's aircraft carrier of the future is beginning to take shape and first bids are expected to be received by the end of the year. The £2 billion contract will be awarded to the winning bidder by the end of the year. The carrier will be built in the US and will be the largest ship ever built in the world. It will be the first of a new class of carriers, the Zumwalt-class, named after the late Admiral Elmo Zumwalt. The carrier will be built by the Huntington Ingalls Industries shipyard in Maryland. The carrier will be the largest ship ever built in the world. It will be the first of a new class of carriers, the Zumwalt-class, named after the late Admiral Elmo Zumwalt. The carrier will be built by the Huntington Ingalls Industries shipyard in Maryland.

US giants bid to build new Ark Royal

£2bn contract on offer to build Navy's aircraft carrier of the future, reports Michael Evans

THE design of the Royal Navy's aircraft carrier of the future is beginning to take shape and five companies, including two from the United States, are expected to bid for the £2 billion contract.

Although the two carriers will be built in a British shipyard, Boeing and Lockheed Martin, two of the biggest defence companies in the United States, will be on the list of bidders. The contract is due to be placed in mid 2003.



An artist's impression of the short take-off and vertical landing version of the Navy's new aircraft carrier. A jump-jet version of the Joint Strike Fighter would be used

ish Aerospace, Marconi Electronic Systems, and the French firm Thomson CSF, the ministry has outlined the options: a platform for short take-off and vertical landing aircraft, using a sid jump at the end of the flight deck; a short take-off aircraft that

needs an "arrested recovery" — taking off from a ski jump but landing on an angled strip with an arresting wire and hook; and a conventional take-off that will require a catapult system for launching.

The biggest expense is going to be the aircraft selected for

the new carrier: up to £7 billion. Each carrier will have about 50 aircraft, a mix of fixed-wing and helicopters. Each carrier will also be able to carry out 150 aircraft missions a day.

If a conventional take-off carrier is chosen, the ministry

will be looking at aircraft such as the American F18E or F18F, the Joint Strike Fighter being developed jointly in the United States and Britain, and a variant of the French Rafale. For the short take-off vertical landing option, the most likely aircraft is a jump-jet version of

the Joint Strike Fighter, and for the short take-off but arrested recovery type the ministry will study a maritime version of the four-nation Eurofighter. The crew complement for the new carrier will be about 1,000, the same as the present smaller carriers. It will take

50,000 man-hours to build. Every detail of the design will be worked out on a computer so that, before construction begins, the ministry will be able to produce a "virtual reality" ship. "This will help to iron out all the potential problems," an MoD source said.

Workmen told to swap 'luv' for madam

By Paul Wilkinson

COUNCIL workmen accustomed to calling tenants "mate" or "luv" have been ordered to stop being overfamiliar and to address them instead as "Sir" or "Madam".

Two hundred joiners, plumbers, electricians and other tradesmen have received the instructions in a letter from Manchester City Council's works department.

The letter says: "Addressing tenants as 'mate' or 'luv' etc is inappropriate familiarity and damages the professional relationship between ourselves and our clients. Better to use more formal terms such as Sir, Madam, Mr and Mrs, until such time as the tenant asks you to do otherwise."

But one of the joiners said: "It's laughable. We all call tenants and each other 'mate' and 'luv' and it just comes naturally. No one takes offence round here."

Peter North, the council's director of works, said that his department was having second thoughts and the instruction might be amended.

Chauvinist pigs beat talking pig in ratings fight

By Carol Midgley
Media Correspondent

A RISQUE episode of the Indian comedy *Men Behaving Badly* was the most-watched programme on Christmas Day. The show, which dealt bluntly with impotence, pornography and masturbation, pulled in an estimated 13.9 million viewers, 60 per cent of the television audience.

A BBC spokeswoman said that there were "a handful" of complaints, but "the number was tiny compared with the millions of people who watched and enjoyed it".

However, the Christmas viewing figures will be cited as further evidence that the demand for "family" viewing is waning as children turn to video and computer games. The BBC's main family film, *Babe*, about a talking pig, just made it into the top ten, with 8.8 million viewers, according to unconsolidated figures from the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board, which samples about 4,000 households.

One television critic described the Christmas Day episode of *Men Behaving Badly* as one that would "mystify the kids, horrify the in-laws and mortify just about anyone watching it with mother".

TV TOP 10

- 1 *Men Behaving Badly* (BBC1) 13.9m
- 2 *EastEnders* (BBC1) (8.30pm) 13.8m
- 3 *Coronation Street* (ITV) 13.5m
- 4 *They Think It's All Over* (BBC1) 12.1m
- 5 *Before They Were Famous* (BBC1) 11.4m
- 6 *You've Been Framed* (ITV) 10.7m
- 7 *Empire State* (ITV) 10.1m
- 8 *EastEnders* (BBC1) (8.25pm) 9.8m
- 9 *Auntie's Springing New Bloomers* (BBC1) 9.1m
- 10 *Babe* (BBC1) 8.8m

Screened at 9.50pm, it was the first of a three-part end to the series. It is the second consecutive year that it has been top at Christmas. *EastEnders* also attracted 13.9 million viewers, although people did not watch it for as long, and it recorded a share of 56.9 per cent.

The numbers watching the Queen's broadcast dropped for the fourth successive year, to a total of 10.4 million on BBC1 and ITV. As recently as 1993, it had about 16 million viewers. Top Christmas shows of the past include: 1978, *The Sound of Music*, 28 million; 1983, *The Two Ronnies*, 11.1 million; 1988, *EastEnders*, 24.7 million; 1993, *Only Fools and Horses*, 18.2 million.

Leading article, page 21

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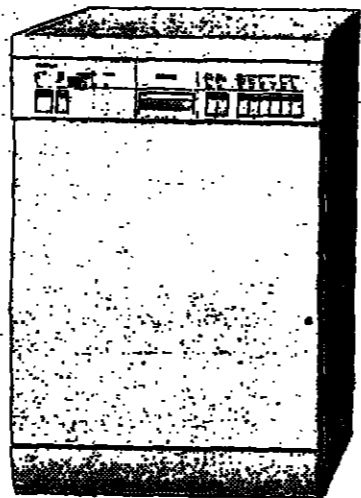
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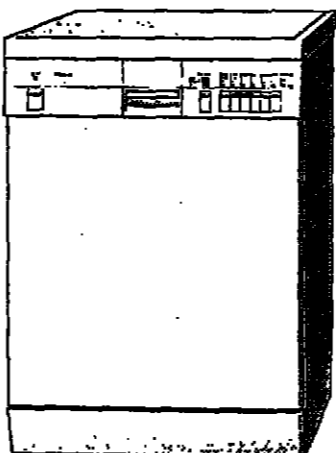
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 - Height adjustable top basket
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 - Extremely quiet operation



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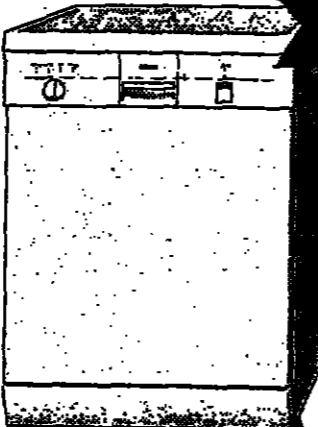
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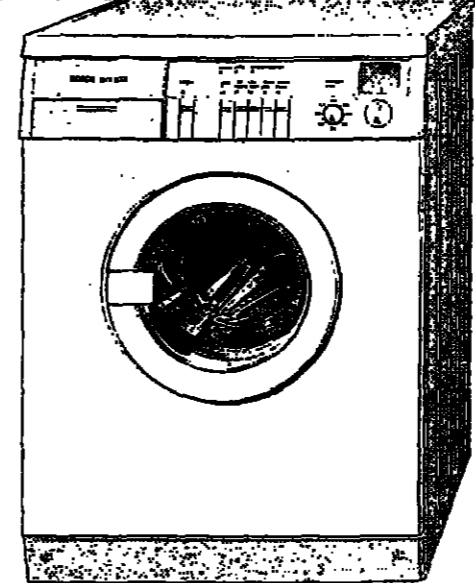
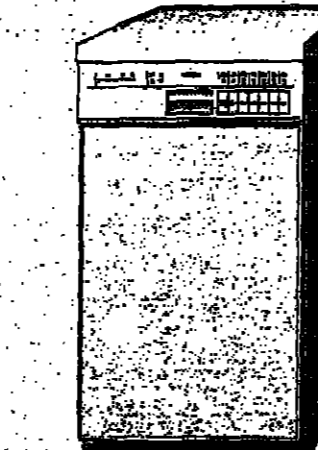
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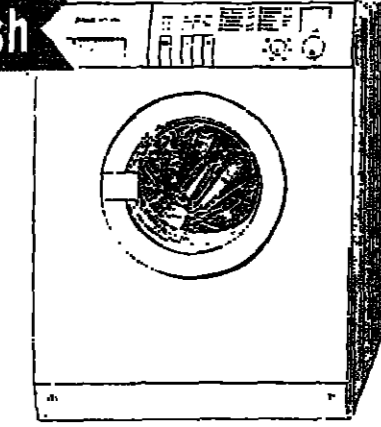
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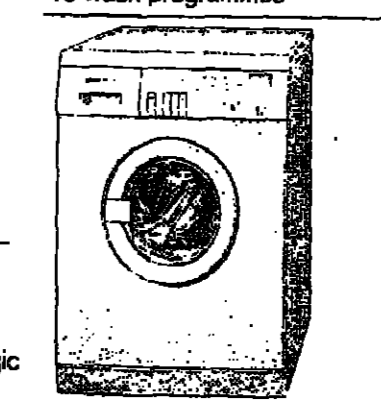
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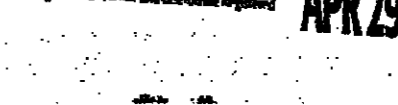
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MENTS LISTINGS

BMA may clear way for more transplants

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

LONG waiting lists for transplant operations are forcing a rethink on rules covering the removal of organs from people who die in hospital.

The British Medical Association's ethics committee has agreed for the first time that the profession should consider dropping its historic opposition to an idea known as presumed consent, under which organs are removed automatically for transplant unless there is family objection.

The issue will be one of the main items to be considered at the association's annual representatives' meeting in the summer and, if doctors back the idea, the Government will come under pressure to change the law. Michael Wilkes, chairman of the ethics committee, said that the profession had, in the past, thought that it would be too difficult to draft the necessary legislation in a way that would protect those who did not want to donate their organs. There was also a fear that the change might lead to people opting out of organ donation in such large numbers that it did more harm than good.

However, he said, there now appeared to be a shift in medical opinion in favour of the interests and rights of those awaiting transplants. One factor in that shift is that relatively few organs are available for transplant, given the low number of road accidents in Britain. Another factor is that keeping patients on long-term kidney dialysis is more expensive than a transplant, and provides a poorer quality of life.

Under existing legislation, organs can be removed only

Top-secret cannabis ready for medicinal harvest

By HELEN RUMBELOW

BRITAIN'S first crop of government-licensed cannabis is to be harvested secretly for medical research this week by a specially vetted team of mature botanists. No younger staff were employed to grow the crop because of fears that they might be tempted to mix business with pleasure.

Trials on up to 2,000 people will begin once medicine has been distilled from the plants in the spring, in the hope of developing treatments for illnesses such as multiple sclerosis and epilepsy.

The crop has been guarded round the clock as hundreds of fully potent plants have reached 8ft in the past four months. No one but the Home Office and the staff of GW Pharmaceuticals know the location of the greenhouse in southern England.

Geoffrey Guy, chairman of the company, holds the only licence for growing the controlled drug for medical research,



Geoffrey Guy in the research greenhouse somewhere in England: "Eventually we aim to breed a special MS variety and or an epilepsy variety"

and the trials will take several years. Next week the Government is set to approve guidelines for a separate series of trials by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society.

Dr Guy said that Britain was alone in its pragmatic

and open-minded approach to research of the drug. "We enjoy a very liberal research environment," he said. "Our first objective is to get research done, not to find a thousand reasons to block it."

Botanists chose ten varie-

ties for the first crop, aimed at getting a high yield of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) as well as cannabidiol (CBD). The estimated 1,000 MS sufferers who use cannabis illegally buy a product high in THC because that is the psychoactive

ingredient which recreational users enjoy. Scientists are also interested in CBD as it is believed to reduce the side-effects of THC and be useful in treating strokes and epilepsy. Dr Guy said: "Eventually we aim to

breed a special MS variety or epilepsy variety." After the harvest, the plants will be hung up to dry, then processed to produce a treacly liquid. This is cleaned up and can be modified into a thinner liquid for use in inhalers.

Where consent is taken for granted

AUTOMATIC removal of organs from patients who die in hospital is known as presumed consent on the ground that the patient is presumed to have been willing to donate them if given the chance (Ian Murray writes). Various systems exist in continental Europe and in Singapore.

The strictest type applies in Austria, where organs can be removed provided the person concerned did not express an objection during his or her lifetime. This became law in 1982, formalising a 200-year-old tradition of routinely using corpses for medical purposes.

In Belgium, if there is no explicit objection by the deceased, relatives can object,

but the medical profession is not required to seek their views. In France and Spain organs can be removed unless the deceased has made an explicit or informal objection at any time.

In Singapore only non-citizens and Muslims are automatically excluded from donating organs.

The system of presumed consent has made a considerable impact on the number of organs available in Belgium and Singapore. Germany, The Netherlands, Italy, Canada, Australia and New Zealand operate an "opting in" system, with donor cards and a national register, similar to that in Britain.

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Jan Cox with her brother, Martin Squires

Christmas dash to save brother

By A CORRESPONDENT

A WOMAN who flew from Australia in the hope of saving her brother from leukaemia is to undergo tests to see whether their bone marrow matches.

Jan Cox, 36, gave up a family Christmas in Perth to be with her brother, Martin Squires, in Plymouth. Initial blood tests in Australia indicated that their marrow may match, but further tests are needed before doctors decide whether to perform a transplant early next year.

Mr Squires, 37, has run five marathons and was shocked when doctors diagnosed myeloid leukaemia. Tests on his other four siblings failed to find a match, so he turned to Mrs Cox,

who emigrated five years ago.

Mrs Cox, who brought her husband, Paul, and daughter, Leanne, 11, to Britain, said: "I don't care what the operation involves. I will go through with it to save my brother."

"Martin and I have always been close and I missed him more than anything when we moved down under."

Mr Squires said: "It was about a month before we got the result of Jan's test. It was an awful wait and, when I heard the news, the relief was immense."

Doctors believe that Mr Squires has a 75 per cent chance of survival after a transplant.

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Brown's man faces long climb back to acceptance

Adviser has resisted pressure to go in past. Can he survive again, asks Philip Webster



Charlie Whelan, who joined Mr Brown's team after working for an engineering union

ONE of the most accessible figures in politics was unusually out of reach yesterday. Callers to Charlie Whelan's telephone pager were told that the Chancellor's press secretary "is unavailable until January 4".

Perhaps it is not surprising that Mr Whelan, who is on a walking holiday "somewhere in Britain", has made himself incommunicado. Even before Peter Mandelson and Tony Blair had agreed the Trade and Industry Secretary's resignation, Mr Whelan had been "fingered" by "friends" as the source of the leak about Mr Mandelson's £375,000 loan from Geoffrey Robinson. In spite of his denials, it was even being whispered that Mr Whelan had destabilised the Government by his actions.

In a leaked mobile telephone call last week, John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, was allegedly heard to say: "Alastair's saying that they have got to get rid of this bastard at last." Was the "Alastair" Alastair Campbell, Mr Blair's press secretary, and was the "bastard" Mr Whelan?

Mr Whelan, 44, was portrayed in the Sunday press — stories described by official Treasury sources as malicious and baseless — as a fixer hawking around other loans from Mr Robinson to ministers to help them to move to London.

It was also alleged that, because Mr Robinson partly financed Mr Brown's office in Opposition, the salaries of Mr Whelan and other advisers were higher than they otherwise would have been. This again was denied by Treasury sources. It was pointed out that Mr Whelan's salary was lower than that of other special advisers.

The former communist began working for Mr Brown five years ago. Previously he had worked for the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. The son of a civil servant, Mr Whelan was born in London and took a politics degree at City of London Polytechnic. Mr Mandelson was happy when he was brought into the Labour machine to work for Mr Brown. But 1994 brought a parting of the ways. Mr Mandelson, although backing Mr Blair in the leadership contest, went to almost ludicrous lengths to pretend that Mr Brown was still in the running.

All but those around Mr Brown saw that Mr Blair had to be the candidate, but Mr Mandelson was forever condemned as duplicitous by the Brown camp. From that moment, Mr Whelan was accused by Mr Mandelson and much of the Labour leadership of running an independent press operation on behalf of his boss, often to the detriment of others.

Mr Whelan has many media friends, in spite of the coarse language in which he tries to knock down stories he considers "off-message" and his occasionally aggressive manner. One of his closest friends is Paul Routledge, author of the biography of Mr Brown that showed his lingering resentment over the leadership election. His latest book, an unauthorized biography of Mr Mandelson, is due shortly.

Mr Whelan has told friends that he pleaded with Mr Routledge not to write it, fearing that it would cause trouble between his master and Mr Blair. The week before last, Mr Mandelson learnt that the Routledge book did indeed contain the information which, al-

though he failed to see it at the time, was to halt his ministerial career. Only five people — Mr Mandelson, his adviser Ben Wegg-Prosser and his solicitor father, Mr Robinson and Mr Robinson's secretary — knew of the leak. Nothing will ever convince Mr Mandelson and his camp that Mr Whelan was not somehow involved in telling Mr Routledge. Mr Whelan denied this. Even if he had the information he would have known that its disclosure would have been just as damning to Mr Robinson, a great friend, as Mr Mandelson. Did it therefore come out by accident? We may never be told. Yesterday Mr Mandelson claimed no interest in discovering whether Mr Whelan was the source. "I don't care about Whelan. I will refuse to let him become a wedge between myself and the Chancellor."

Mr Mandelson's downfall may have gone some way to restoring his relations with Mr Brown. The Chancellor has spoken to him five times in recent days and helped him to draft his resignation letter. "Peter is touched by the support he has had from Gordon and so many others," a friend said.

The "friends" are less restrained. "The Prime Minister has lost his closest adviser and ministerial colleague all because of a rivalry going back to 1994 — and it is all because Charlie Whelan could not be Alastair Campbell. It's pathetic and hateful," one said.

Mr Whelan is under threat, if Mr Prescott is to be believed. Mr Brown has seen off previous attempts to remove him. It has been reported that Mr Campbell tried to get him dismissed soon after the election, he was again in trouble after *The Times* disclosed last year that Mr Brown was ruling out membership of the single currency for this Parliament and Mr Whelan was blamed for the chaotic manner in which the story was confirmed.

Mr Whelan has, however, worked well for Mr Brown, one of the most popular past-war chancellors. To be forced to drop Mr Whelan would be humiliating and would undermine his position within the Government.

Mr Whelan may be in the mountains, but he is again walking on a tightrope. If Mr Prescott was heard correctly, he may soon fall. But anyone trying to remove him will first have to get past Mr Brown.

'It's all because Charlie Whelan could not be Alastair Campbell. It's pathetic and hateful'

Leading article, page 21

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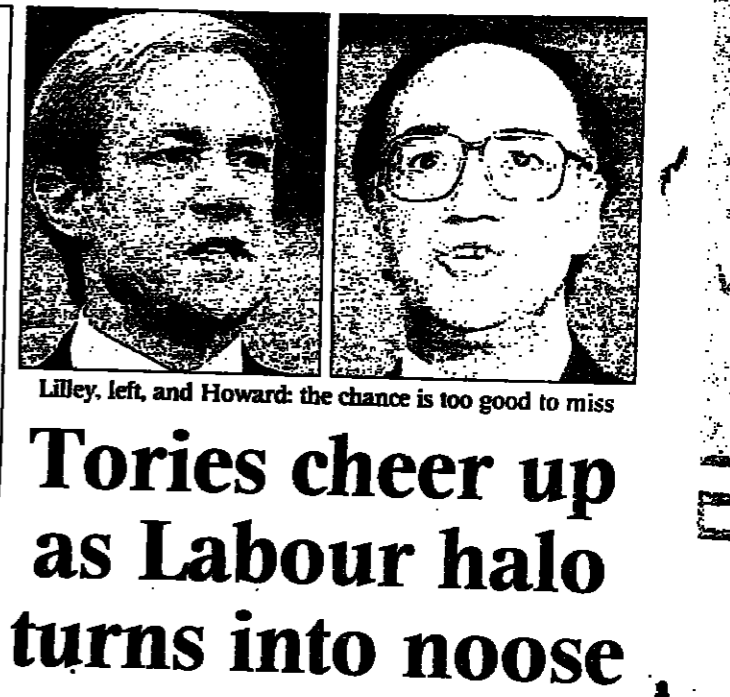
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Lilley, left, and Howard: the chance is too good to miss

Tories cheer up as Labour halo turns into noose

CONSERVATIVE spokesmen happily broke into their Christmas holidays yesterday, taking to the airwaves to keep up the attack over the Mandelson resignation.

"Where will it all end?" asked Frances Maude, the Shadow Chancellor, after the disclosure that Peter Mandelson accepted a free flight in the private jet of Linda Wachner, the clothing millionaire.

Michael Howard, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, said that it was now becoming clear that Geoffrey Robinson was the "Godfather of New Labour," referring to hotly denied reports that the former Paymaster-General had offered loans to other ministers.

At last the Tories believe that they have a chance to advance from the dimly lit since the election. Their contributions to broadcasts over recent days have carried a conviction, often lacking since then. Peter Lilley, the deputy leader, who is not regarded as a media star, gave one of his better performances in an interview yesterday. "They are loving it," a Tory strategist said. "There is no difficulty finding volunteers."

Ministers do not deny that Mr Mandelson's departure has struck a blow at the heart of the Government. Since May 1997, the Conservatives have been reluctant to raise sleaze as a political issue, fearing that it will remind the public of one of the big reasons it rejected them. But the chance to remove the Labour halo on sleaze is too good to miss and the Tories intend to keep up the campaign throughout the parliamentary recess and when the Commons returns.

The Conservatives want to dismiss the Labour contention that Mr Blair has been more decisive in dealing with alleged wrongdoing than his Conservative predecessors. So yesterday Mr Howard attacked him for not acting sooner over Mr Mandelson.

Interviewed on Radio 4's *The World This Weekend*, Mr Howard charged: "Tony Blair knew all this was to be known about this on December 17, six days before Peter Mandelson resigned. It was only after Mr Mandelson's attempts to hide the truth failed that they decided that he would have to go."

"Mr Blair was doing what he always does, he was waiting to see which way the wind blew. The truth is that this episode speaks volumes about Mr Blair and his Government. It's a Government without any real convictions, without any principles, obsessed with newspaper headlines. It will die by newspaper headlines."

Peter's friends

PETER MANDELSON'S friends wrote him the kind of character references yesterday that would look good on a mortgage application.

Derek Draper, his disgraced former aide, Carla Powell, wife of Baroness Thatcher's most trusted adviser, and Robert Harris, the millionaire novelist, all wrote enthusiastic eulogies on his demise.

Mr Draper called him a "partly self-created monster" who liked to poke fun at those in fear of him. Impatience was the undoing of this complex "gay man who loves dipping in and out of the high life", he wrote in the *Mail on Sunday*.

Mr Draper fell from grace himself earlier this year when he was charged with selling access to members of the Government. Before this stint as political consultant he was Mr Mandelson's right-hand man, where he often bore the brunt of Peter's frustrations. Mr Mandelson "hates confrontations" and a truly personal nature, and afterwards was often too embarrassed to make conciliatory moves. Mr Draper said.

"Peter reminds me of the Wizard of Oz. Behind the partly self-created monster hides someone afraid to show vulnerability as that would bring the myth crashing down."

Robert Harris, who made his fortune with the novel *Fatherland*, describing what might have happened if Hitler had won the Second World War, refers to him by his children's affectionate nickname, "secretary in a state".

He describes how responsible he feels for his talented friend's demise, as he had

girliness and the humble cardie



MATTHEW WILLIAMSON

Designer



MANOLO BLAHNIK

Shoe designer



DONATELLA VERSACE

Designer



Best: The renewed interest in quality and understated luxury in garments.

Worst: The overload of grey (above), boring clothes in stores — no wonder nobody is buying.

Best: The pleasure of being at Yohji Yamamoto's Spring/Summer '99 show (above).

Worst: Seeing something somebody else did first, coming down another designer's runway show.

Best: The return to colour. Everyone looks ten times better. I also love the femininity, glamour and artisanal detailing with embroidery (above).

Worst: Minimalism.

A cold blast of Asian flu was already gusting through the salons of Paris (and Milan, London and New York). By October, there were clear signs that the Dior show might have represented an apotheosis for the overblown fashion pageant. While a glut of American stalwarts, including Isaac Mizrahi, Anne Klein and Todd Oldham, announced that they were either closing or "downsizing", egos and budgets were being reined in elsewhere. In Paris venues shrank, atmospheres became more intimate and designers rediscovered the joys of showing commercial clothes. This suited the Americans, who have been quietly taking over French fashion with their sleek, slick, less-is-more approach while the Britpack command the headlines. This year saw debut Parisian collections from Marc Jacobs at Louis Vuitton, Narciso Rodriguez at Loewe and Michael Kors at Céline. However, while 1998 may have been the year when French fashion was at its most international (and with Yves Saint Laurent retiring from designing ready-to-wear in October, the dearth of big French names is even more marked), it was also the year when diplomatic relations in the fashion world reached an all-time low. In March the lavish party-cum-fashion show that Giorgio Armani's people had spent months planning, to celebrate the opening of his new shop in St Germain on the site of the "historic" (Sixties) drug store, was cancelled at the last minute: riot police were called

in to manage the 1,200 guests in scenes reminiscent of a *Pink Panther* movie. Officially, the authorities were concerned about fire hazards in the giant marquees, but word had it that the French were livid that the cradle of fashion had become little more than a casting agency for talent from the rest of the world. The Italian press threatened to boycott the rest of Paris fashion week, the Americans chortled all the way back to JFK airport and Armani switched the event to New York. *Nul points* for European harmony. Then some of New York's designers took it upon themselves to tamper with the international fashion show calendar. Tired of being accused of copying European designers (whose shows are always first), Calvin Klein and Donna Karan, egged on by Helmut Lang, jumped the queue and showed in September, before Paris, London and Milan. Alas, not all their colleagues on Seventh Avenue could get their collections ready in time and, therefore, had to keep to the traditional November slot. Cue two New York fashion weeks in one season, many irate buyers and the second organised shambles of 1998. While the four fashion capitals slug it out to see which can obliterate the other,

an unlikely new mecca is in the making. Holland, birthplace of, among others, Viktor and Rolf, the charmingly earnest duo who took their brand of atomic chic to the Paris couture in July, is rapidly replacing Belgium as the spiritual home of all things unwearable but headline-grabbing. Other notable newcomers of the year included Veronique Branquinho (Belgian), Christian Ortiz (Spanish), Robert Carey Williams (Welsh) and the American Jeremy Scott, who hurred down the catwalk screeching "vive l'avant garde" after a show in which trousers with one leg and pairs of shoes with different heel heights made an appearance. Oh dear. Sensibly, most women passed on both these items and instead made the humble cardigan the star of the year — and this was the first summer in years when women seemed to do what fashion editors had been advising — don colour, high heels and go all out for girliness. By winter, however, the rickety relationship between fashion editors and their public had resumed, with the former recommending flat shoes, grey and librarian chic and the latter resolutely ignoring them. But while that

golden summer lasted, it was fun to see pedal-pushers becoming another hit. Another cult of 1998 was the pashmina. Perhaps sensing that when the financial climate feels chilly, what is really called for isn't sackcloth but double-face cashmere, designers embraced luxury for winter. Those silly shawls sourced from the chins of Kashmiri goats became ubiquitous — although no one seemed to pay full price for one. The Indian influence did not stop there. As the year wore on, nice young girls in the Home Counties began sending away for mail-order Mendhi kits: Jerry Hall and Madonna appeared in public with bindhis on their foreheads. By the time Zara Phillips's tongue-stud made the news, it seemed that nothing was truly subversive any more. While catwalk fashion continued to perplex and entertain, high-street fashion got better and better, with shorter lead times and yet more designers — among them Hussein Chalayan, Tracy Boyd, Amanda Wakeley — signing deals with Top Shop and Principles. And when designers weren't slaving over cut-price lines, they were churning out home-wear ranges. Jasper Conran, Nicole Farhi, Betsy Jackson, Browns of South Molton Street and Margaret Howell are five British companies now tip-toeing where once only Ralph Lauren walked. The result? Analysts might be cautious, the figures might be bleak even at blue-chip companies such as Donna Karan, but in throws, cushions and scented candles we are rich indeed.

By the time Zara Phillips's tongue stud made the news, nothing was subversive any more

Kate Winslet wearing Givenchy. Galliano and McQueen have worked for the fashion house.

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Photograph: Glyn Kirk/Action
Jan 10: (over) men's 100m sprint (Wales) and
Jan 17: Men's under 200m sprint (Wales) and
Feb 1: Women's under 200m sprint (Wales) and
Feb 2: Wales men's 200m sprint (Wales) and
Feb 3: Wales women's 200m sprint (Wales) and
Feb 4: England men's 200m sprint (England) and
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THE TIMES ARTS

THEATRE Anna Dobson Arts the piano man THIS PAGE



The imagination takes flight

DANCE IN LONDON: Debra Craine sees Birmingham's fine Nutcracker and the Royal's classic Cinderella

Peter Wright's 1990 production of The Nutcracker, now ennobled in London's Lyceum Theatre, has proved an enduring success for Birmingham Royal Ballet. And it's easy to see why. Magic and wonderment lie at the heart of Wright's theatrical vision and so vibrantly are they realised that they bring a thrill to adult and child alike.

Clara's Mother, a small role that comes to prominence through the consummate elegance of Tait herself. On opening night Barry Wordsworth conducted the Royal Ballet Orchestra, highlighting the sweetness in Tchaikovsky's score. The Royal Ballet, meanwhile, opened its festive season at the Festival Hall with five performances of Ashton's panto-inspired Cinderella (his La Fille mal gardée opens tomorrow night). The occasion introduced a new Cinderella in the person of Sarah Wildor, a first soloist who is clearly overdue for promotion.



Festive fun from Birmingham Royal Ballet: Peter Wright's "magic and wondrous" staging of The Nutcracker is at London's Lyceum Theatre

Act II is less obviously aimed at children. The spooky palace with its towering columns encloses the dance in a deserted and mysterious secret garden. We are in psychological territory here, a dream world conjured up by Drosselmeyer as a landscape for Clara's rite of passage. Wright has placed Clara firmly at the story's centre. He makes her a full dancing role, casting an adult dancer instead of the young girl so often favoured. This makes his heroine older than many other Claras, a teenager who already has an eye for the boys (and who is probably too old for dolls, even Nutcracker ones).

Wilder never relies on gesture to tell a story; the nuance of character comes from deep within her dancing. She has the most lush tones to her phrasing and an innate grace that sees her transformation from kitchen drudge to sparkling princess as if to the manner born. Her Act II ballroom solo was delivered with aplomb and she shaped Ashton's writing most beautifully. The admirable Michael Nunn partnered Wildor well and made the lifts look effortless. Peter Abegglen and Alastair Marriott gave us a pair of Step-Sisters mercifully free of the pantomimic excesses of Cinderella's ugly siblings often deliver. They are still coarse — the writing and the scenario demand it — but they are human with it. Their ballroom scene was especially enjoyable. Abegglen and Marriott making mock tender eyes at Sultors Gary Avis and Tom Sapsford, the latter utterly delightful in his cameo as the little Napoleon.

Old instruments and bad old habits

As has been noted on these pages more than once recently, the guiding principles of John Boyden's New Queen's Hall Orchestra have, on the face of it, an encouraging ring. Modern instruments can sound less characterful than their earlier counterparts (the NQHO uses instruments from the beginning of the century), they can (especially large-bore, high-powered brass) unbalance textures, and too many performances these days (both live and recorded) do lack conviction and spontaneity.

Where the project errs, in my view, is in its willingness to embrace less than first-rate standards of playing. The pursuit of technical perfection is, surely, a worthy goal, albeit not an end in itself; to celebrate anything less is a retrograde step and likely to appeal only to those who find the blemishes of historical recordings a reassuring link with the world they grew up in.

If the NQHO hoped that its all-Strauss Barbican concert on Monday would provide a sumptuous carpet of sound under which technical shortcomings could be swept, they were sadly mistaken. The standard of playing ranged from acceptable to execrable: the strings often failing to move together, the antique brass instruments (for all their notional virtues) proving impossibly recalcitrant. Woodwind instruments, having suffered less fatigue over the decades, were generally played with greater success.

Claire Rutter, standing in for an indisposed Margaret Price, gamely took on both the Four Last Songs and the four earlier songs of Op 27. In the former, she was able to glide easily through the compass and responded sensitively to the text. She floated some exquisite lines in Op 27 too, and, abetted by Wyn Morris on the rostrum, switched effectively from the rapt stillness of Morgen to the barely contained ecstasy of Cécile.

Morris was not always so inspired: in Metamorphosen he seemed unable adequately to control the swirling counterpoint of the 23 string lines. In Death and Transfiguration, having just about negotiated the tricky introduction, he allowed things to fall apart as soon as the Allegro started. Shoddy execution mercilessly exposed the lack of momentum, though happily the ensemble improved in time for a stirring climax.

Every note was in place, too, in the instrumental items, with Philip Pickett's usual proficient team doing their stuff in an organ estampie from the Robertsbridge Codex, the earliest surviving source of keyboard music, and some even earlier dance pieces. But where was the spark?

Upstaged by morris men

If the prospect of a 13th-century shepherds play seems esoteric, at least some of those who packed the New London Consort's Queen Elizabeth Hall concert must have been enticed by the mention of candlelit processions and morris dancers in the publicity material. Even so, it is one of the curious properties of Christmas that medieval music suddenly comes into its own, especially when as attractively packaged as here.

In the event the mummings were a let-down, partly because their appearance was so brief. And the attempt to suggest a "churchy" environment through a procession which featured candles but was actually well lit by the hall lights (safety regulations, I assume) was doomed to failure in the QEH, a concert space almost totally lacking in ambience. But you can't blame them

for trying. The Albion Morris Men brought a dash of action in their recreation of a traditional Christmas mummings' play, but this sudden burst of semi-pagan activity seemed strangely at odds with the rest of the programme, and not just because of the abrupt shift into pantomime mode, with the audience ready to boo and cheer as St George "bought" the Turkish Knight.

No, the trouble was that this brief interlude of merry-making emphasised the almost total lack of spontaneity in the highly polished but oddly uninvolved and uninvolved performances of the New London Consort. Clearly, like is not being compared with like here — since a morris dance has little in common with a liturgical play (the Rouen Officium pastorum) consisting of a Latin dialogue sung in plainchant. And the consort of eight singers did sing this beautifully.

Every note was in place, too, in the instrumental items, with Philip Pickett's usual proficient team doing their stuff in an organ estampie from the Robertsbridge Codex, the earliest surviving source of keyboard music, and some even earlier dance pieces. But where was the spark?

CONCERTS

TESS KNIGHTON BARRY MILLINGTON

HILARY FINCH

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Farce with class

Twenty minutes into the first act of this French farce, Sophie the maid says: "You'll tell me when the joke's started, won't you?" This is a risky line for any play, but particularly when an accident to the leading actress has disrupted rehearsals and the play is opening to the press without any previews.

As the first ingredients were dropped into the plot there was a definite sense that too much attention was being paid to getting the recipe right. But the gathering enthusiasm of the audience should have told the company all was well.

The joke that Sophie doesn't want to miss is a trick being played on her master, a provincial magistrate (David Timson) of unimpeachable probity, who has never thought of looking beyond his wife—and indeed seldom thinks of looking at her, ashamed as he is

that she was once a chambermaid (Auril Smith, with an accent to curdle milk). The magistrate's juniors arrange for La Gobette (Lucy Tregear), a musical comedy charmer, to stay in his home while his wife is away, and naturally, this being farce, there arrives that same night the Minister of Justice determined to root out loose morals in the judiciary. Not only is La Gobette mistaken for him for the absent wife, but he falls a willing victim to her charms. Thus the situation is set for three acts of misunderstandings, coincidences, authority caught with its metaphorical pants down and the ladies with their dresses unmetaphorically round their ankles.

The dreadful pain of the trio should be blamed on Robert Cogo-Fawcett and Brahm Murray, whose version of the play was enjoyably staged in Manchester and the West End ten years ago. The original authors, Maurice Hennequin and Pierre Veber, called it *La Présidente*, a useless title this side of the Channel.

The bubbling good nature of La Gobette is a world away from the heartless mechanics of a Feydeau farce, and a warmth of Tregear's performance radiates through the evening. It is she who is never seriously dismayed by the social catastrophes opening like chasms around her, although she does flinch a little when obliged to dress herself in the frumpy garments of the magistrate's wife (now mistaken for the new cleaning lady). I admit to a pang of sorrow when La Gobette's exquisite rose-pink lace corset disappeared beneath drab brown.

The happy achievements of Sam Walters's production for the Orange Tree in Richmond include Richard Heffer's imperious disdain as the Minister, Jeremy Crutchley's bilingual policeman and Stuart Fox's treacherous usher.

JEREMY KINGSTON



The family that goes right over the top together: Clive Rowe and Aeva May as the Whittingtons at the Hackney Empire

On a foggy winter's night in Sheffield, what better cheer than a deep draught of South Pacific sea-breeze, washed down by the timelessness of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *West, up to a point*.

From the ragged-back set—a few huge rocks, impending ominously overhead and a polythene sea—to the choreography, which veers unhelpfully from the acrobatic to the static, this great blast of a musical goes off at half-cock. There is little attempt to evoke the seductive sorcery of the South Seas, the fragile otherworldliness that the American Navy blunderbusses into with all its home-grown prejudices in tow. Nicola Blackman as Bloody Mary, enticingly cragmatic in that great strea song *Bali Hai*, cannot do it all on her own.

Nor is there much chemistry in the two central relationships—difficult enough, admittedly, in the case of Lieutenant Cable and Bloody Mary's quiescent daughter Liza. In the opening scene, Emile, the reclusive but supposedly ardent Frenchman in

Musical pairs all at sea

love with Nurse Nellie Forbush, tells her that he once killed a man. Instinctively graceful—but importantly so, given her later revelation as his relationship with a Polynesian woman—she immediately puts her trust in him. "Thank you, Nellie. You like my place," replies Mark Adams innately, as if she had complimented him on serving a nice cup of tea. As a result, *Some Enchanted Evening*, though musically fine, falls dramatically flat.

The director, Deborah Paige, is better at teasing out the discordance at the heart of

this most melodic of musicals. "It's a mean little world full of mean little men," sings Cable (Jeremy Finch), suitably contrite over his abandonment of Liza. But a few lusty choruses aside, too much else is unstrangely flat. That gift of a part, the swaggering but soft-hearted sailor Billie—half stupefied by what he sees, half just stupid—is played by Cornell John as simply too sweet a guy to give an edge to the dubious cultural invasion he obliviously represents.

Rising above it all is Janie Dee as Nellie Forbush—even without a voice quite big enough to belt out the show-stoppers with the power they demand. Visciously breezy in *I'm Going to Wash That Man Right Outta My Hair*, clowning elastically as a butch sailor in the cabaret, hitting the right note of confused naivety as the girl from Little Rock forced to confront her irrevocable bigamy in an alien place, she is at her winning best caressing the stage with loose-limbed charm in *I'm In Love With A Wonderful Guy*.

NIGEL CLIFF

Airs on a shoestring?

On the stage of the Watermill Theatre in Baginbun, Kansas, contraries expectations by not being black and white but a land bathed in sunshine with a wide blue sky on the rear wall, cluttered with clouds and inset with doors (style of Magritte), *Jeremy Kingstone* writes. Throughout the evening these doors are opened to obtain such necessary props as the oil can for the Tin Man, and the musical instruments that mark this out as a John Doyle production.

While his troupe of actor-musicians is going through its paces on Uncle Henry's farm we can speculate whether it will be the trumpeter, the fiddler or the guitarist who will later play the Wicked Witch of the West. The flautist will certainly end up as the Lion because there are already patchers of fur on his cap, but there is no way of deciding which of the pale-faced guys—one strumming the banjo, the other squeezing the accordion—

Noises off, on and on

The Hackney Empire is not just a pretty facade and a beautiful interior. Those who toil within its red-and-gold walls always pack a stunning amount of energy into their annual pantomime—and, as one who this year found himself not just singing a song about the joys of yo-yos, but mewing and miming an enforcer of the same number, I mean this as a mixed compliment.

Susie McKenna and her altogether admirable cast have the decency not to invite members of the audience onstage to share in the travails of Whittington and his moggie, but, by God, they work us hard. Even critics from parts West must yell "Hiya, Dick" when Aeva May's Amazonian hero cries "Hiya, Hackney". We are also required to shout "Wake up, idle Jack" when a rodent creeps up on the character of that name, roar "Knickers, sir" when someone tries to steal Dick's Mum's supermarket trolley, riposte "Oh no, you're not" when Anita Dobson's Queen Rat insists she's going to destroy our hero, and so on and so forth.

At times the noise verges on the horrific, and not only because of miking that made a lullaby by a mermaid sound as if small A-bombs were exploding. We spectators have a deceitful quota to fulfil too. Did I really join *The Times* to assure a sadistic actor in an orange wig topped with daisies that I was enjoying myself by screaming "yes" not once, not twice, but three times? Well, all right, it is probably

THEATRE

Dick Whittington Hackney Empire

healthier than inwardly growling at some worthy incomprehensible play by Howard Barker, Howard Brenton, or Howard something else. The production's big successes are Dobson, who has found a way of making her protruding, flapping tongue look evil, and Clive Rowe, who affably bulldozes through the role of Dick's Mum in a series of hats that consist, not just of flowers, but of fruit, a toy rugboat and a dalmatian pup.

Its flaw is that it is sometimes formulaic, and this is probably not a flaw at all, since everyone expects pantos to be just that. In any case, how can such an accusation be directed at a *Whittington* that transports the cast from cardboard-cutout London to South Seas learning with joke octopuses and southern lands with snapping dinosaurs? All the same, I did catch myself wishing the verbal jokes weren't so relentlessly lame. What, for example, sits on the seabed and quivers? A nervous wreck. Why, further, did the lobster blush? Because the seaweed. Most children ditch this sort of Christmas-cracker stuff with their belief in Father Christmas. So should the Hackney Empire.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

This week in THE TIMES



DANCE

Family fun with Frederick Ashton's *La Fille mal gardée* on the South Bank OPENS: Tomorrow REVIEW: Thursday



POP

New Order hits Manchester supported by the Chemical Brothers, Underworld, et al GIG: Tomorrow REVIEW: Thursday



FILM

The *Star Trek: Insurrection* crew boldly go where no one has gone before RELEASED: New Year's Day REVIEW: New Year's Eve



MUSIC

Johann Strauss's lively music ushers in the new year at the Wigmore Hall CONCERT: New Year's Day REVIEW: Next week

PLUS: Viennese delights at the Barbican on New Year's Day with the LSO

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NEWS

Special duty for Mandelson

Tony Blair has asked Peter Mandelson to operate as his special envoy in building a strong political alliance with Germany.

Teenager may have died from cold

The body of teenager Sally Greig, who disappeared after an office Christmas party in Perth five days ago, was discovered lying in a snowy field yesterday.

Royal letters found

A hidden cache of love letters exchanged between Queen Victoria and her gamekeeper John Brown which reveal the depths of their intimate friendship has been uncovered in the attic of a house on Royal Deeside.

Queen to open Dome

The Queen will open the Millennium Dome on New Year's Eve 1999, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh. Buckingham Palace has announced.

Campaigning costly

The pivotal role of the dollar in American politics means that those wanting to run for President in 2000 must, according to campaign finance experts, spend 1999 raising at least \$22 million - more than £13 million - or \$2,500 an hour.

Straw on call

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, has been told that he must stay in London during next year's millennium celebrations in case of a serious breakdown in public order or a national emergency.

Gales batter Britain

At least four people were killed and another is missing after Christmas storms with winds gusting up to 100 mph battered Britain and Ireland.

Clashes in Kosovo

Fierce fighting erupted again in northern Kosovo as state security forces set up positions inside a village whose last Serb resident was killed by Albanian guerrillas on Saturday.

Euro hazards ahead

If all goes well, Europe's new single currency will harness the economies of 11 states, creating a dynamic bloc of 290 million people.

Carrier takes shape

The design of the Royal Navy's aircraft carrier of the future is beginning to take shape and five companies are expected to bid for the £2 billion contract.

Donor rules reviewed

Doctors may seek a change in the rules covering the removal of organs from people who have died in hospital because of the length of time that patients are waiting for transplants.

Vietnam's drugs war

Doctors may seek a change in the rules covering the removal of organs from people who have died in hospital because of the length of time that patients are waiting for transplants.

No pleasure in marijuana business

Britain's first crop of government-licensed cannabis is to be harvested this week by a team of mature botanists. No younger staff were employed because of fears that they might mix business with pleasure.



Labour MPs rallied yesterday at Midhope Moor, outside Sheffield, in support of proposed "right to roam" laws across Britain. Page 2

BUSINESS

Pensions deadline: Pension companies have called in staff over the Christmas holiday as they struggle to compensate victims of pensions mis-selling ahead of the December 31 deadline.

BTR blow: Shareholders in BTR will lose a £400 million capital return if they vote in favour of the merger with Siebe on January 13. The decision not to complete a promised £2 billion cash payout to shareholders is likely to increase investor dissatisfaction with the Siebe merger terms.

RAC decision: Stephen Byers, the new Trade and Industry Secretary, is expected to move quickly to settle the fate of the RAC motoring organisation that is the target of a £450 million takeover.

PA

Libby Purves: "Despite the odd aberrations, there is a well-worn trail for royal interviews. What you do not do is invite the Duke of Edinburgh on Midweek to mix it with chat-show guests, elbows on the table. But we did."

FASHION

Lisa Armstrong: "This was the year in which a new verb entered colloquial English. Stylish, rich and confined to London, Nicole Kidman showed the ladies how retail therapy is really done by conceiving a passionate relationship with fashion and then buying all of it - in multiples. Being 'kidmanned' has since become one of the more gratifying financial experiences a shopkeeper can have."

CHRISTMAS

Christmas dance: Birmingham Royal Ballet's production of The Nutcracker is delighting audiences at London's Lyceum Theatre.

SPORT

Football: The unjust decision to send off Michael Oakes for handing the ball outside the penalty area on Saturday could affect the destiny of the Premiership title.



TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

ARTS: American history under the spotlight in New York's latest mega-musical Parade. LAW: David Pannick QC, on a vintage year for award-winning events in the legal world.

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,985

A crossword puzzle grid with numbers indicating the starting positions for the clues. The grid is partially filled with letters.

- ACROSS: 1 The map is ordered for a comparison at sea (8). 5 A black mare Turpin rode - one superior to her sisters (6). 10 Concerning the main element in the beginning? Excellent (2,3,5,5). 11 Person who benefits from willing spectators, in general (7). 12 One of small group allowed to put on excursion (7). 13 Huge reptile once seen around is wild (8). 15 Engraver disposes of house, retaining courtyard (5). 18 Shoot a hen (5). 20 Early seventeenth-century woman astride a horse (8). 23 New Meissen design showing goddess (7). 25 Game restricted by unfortunate lapse in study (7). 26 Behave correctly - look after pawns as well as queens (4,4,2,3,2). 27 Tree with fruit given to girl (6). 28 Theatre worker's crops planted beside river (8). DOWN: 1 Humble tinker going round at a leisurely pace (6). 2 Moral uprightiness found, for example, in Trinity characters (9). 3 Great conductor and scholar ultimately became eccentric sort (7). 4 Note about Old Testament woman's ethnic group (5). 6 What a game, making deliveries to strikers (7). 7 Sing praises of former partner with mounting fortune (5). 8 Time inside extended by year, and liable to become longer (8). 9 Eastern fellow holds drunk to be difficult to understand (8). 14 Adapted and arranged duets a record presenter put on (8). 16 Sort of music in which a piano chord is unusual (9). 17 Scot preserves lake in island (8). 19 Renovate pictures to refresh the centre (7). 21 Attempt to embrace a Sandhurst serving girl (7). 22 One shuts up, being comparatively reserved (6). 24 Artist performing in US opera house (5). 25 Essay questions in exam (5).

Times Two Crossword, page 48

AA INFORMATION

Latest Road and Weather conditions. UK Weather - All regions. 0236 444 910. H2S and Link Roads. 0236 401 746. National Motorways. 0236 401 748. Commercial Europe. 0236 401 910. Channel crossing. 0236 401 388. Planning to Heathrow & Gatwick airports. 0236 407 505.

World City Weather

Table with 3 columns: City, Sun, Rain, C, F. Lists various global cities and their weather conditions.

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Send and send car reports from the AA network of 175 cars. 0236 416 509. Dial from your car handset. you may have to set up your mobile mode.

HOURS OF DARKNESS

Sun sets: 3.58 pm. Sun sets: 3.59 pm. Moon sets: 1.36 pm. Full moon January 2. London 3.58 pm to 8.06 am. Bristol 4.05 pm to 8.16 am. Cardiff 3.45 pm to 8.04 am. Manchester 3.55 pm to 8.25 am. Penance 4.26 pm to 8.21 am.

General Scotland and Northern Ireland

General Scotland and Northern Ireland cold with wintry showers. England and Wales chilly and blustery, with sunny spells and showers. Tonight: eastern and central areas dry with frost likely. Western and northern areas milder and cloudier with a few showers.

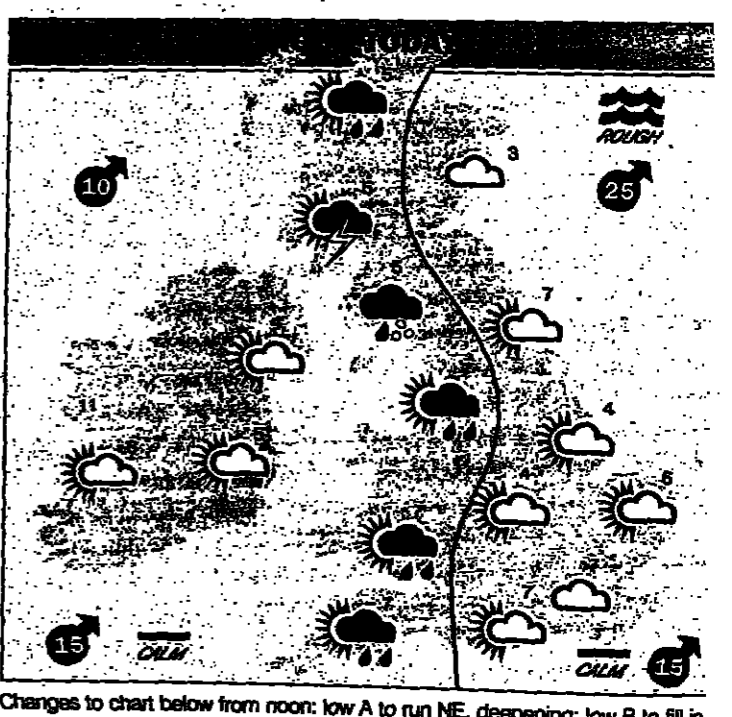
APPOINTMENTS

Table with 3 columns: City, Sun, Rain, C, F. Lists weather conditions for various cities.

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Table with 3 columns: City, Sun, Rain, C, F. Lists weather conditions for various cities.

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Changes to chart below from noon: low A to run NE, deepening; low B to fill in situ; low C to lose identity; lows D and E to slowly fill and drift east

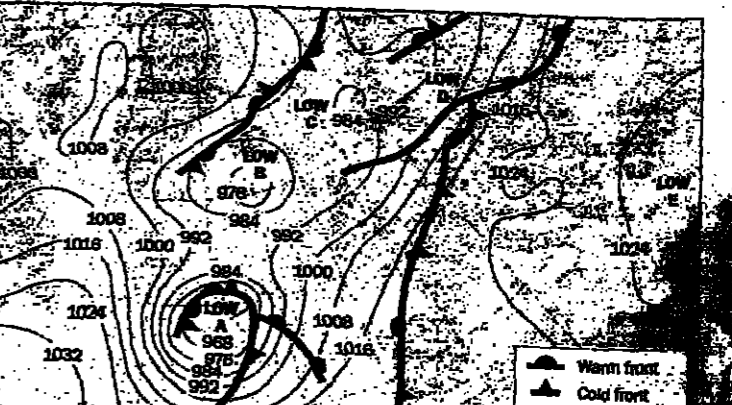


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مكتبة الرياض

UNDER THE SPIN OF SPORT

RESTORING ORDER

Stewart reverts to opening and scores a century for England

PAGE 27

PLUS

Wasps keep up the rugby title chase but Saracens slip up

PAGE 34

1999

ANNUAL FIXTURE

Make a date in '99 with The Times four-page calendar of sport PAGES 35-38

RUN OF THE MILL

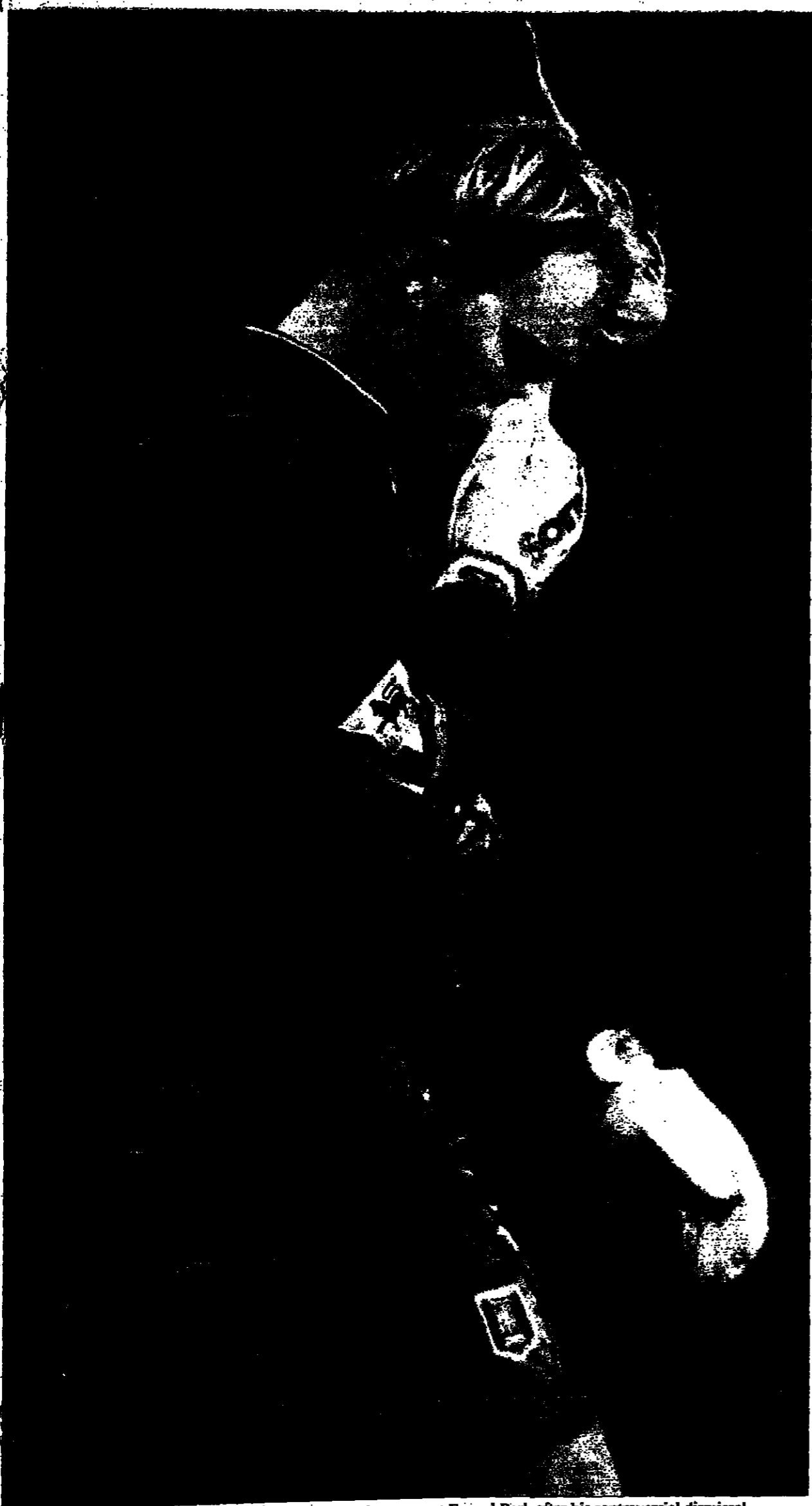
Venetia Williams celebrates King George success

PAGES 40, 41

TIMES SPORT

MONDAY DECEMBER 28 1998

GREGORY'S OFFICIAL COMPLAINT REOPENS VIDEO DEBATE



Oakes makes the long walk back to the dressing-room at Ewood Park after his controversial dismissal during Aston Villa's damaging Boxing Day defeat away to Blackburn Rovers. Photograph: Dan Chung

Oakes felled by Villa's ill wind

By ROB HUGHES, CHIEF SPORTS WRITER

THE ill wind that affected Boxing Day helped to whip up a controversy that could drastically change the course of the FA Carling Premiership season. Aston Villa, having led the title race for most of the first half of the season, not only lost to Blackburn Rovers on Saturday, not only could blame a refereeing error for defeat, but must today, within 48 hours, decide whether Michael Oakes, their goalkeeper, has recovered his nerve sufficiently to carry Villa through against Sheffield Wednesday.

It is paramount for Villa's cause. Oakes, 25, is a goalkeeper of wonderful agility but doubtful mind. His confidence had never, until now, been boosted by a prolonged run in the FA Carling Premiership. Despite a tendency not to come off his line quickly enough for crosses, he was growing match by match, while Mark Bosnich recovers from a shoulder injury.

If Oakes is deemed to be unready to play against Wednesday at Villa Park this afternoon, then John Gregory, his manager, has no choice but to

must if he concluded that the goalkeeper deliberately handled the ball outside his area. Woe is the rule that removes from the ultimate arbiter on the field the power of common sense, as if discretion had been removed from all referees by an act of frontal lobotomy.

Gallagher was in an invidious position. Last season, he had been suspended for failing to send off Steve Bould, of Arsenal, for a foul. This season, all referees had been admonished by Philip Don, who is paid by the FA Premier League to oversee their deeds, after Kasey Keller, the Leicester City goalkeeper, had not been sent off for handling outside his area.

Nevertheless, Gallagher ruined Christmas for those who believe in fair play. Far from Oakes seeking to gain illegal advantage with his hands, the goalkeeper instantly loosened his grip. "The linesman made a monumental error," Gregory said. "Once his flag was up, Dermot [Gallagher] was given no option, but television evidence proved that the linesman was not up with play, he was at least five yards off line, and we have this technology, we are not living in the 1920s, we should use it."

Gregory further insisted that, while he would not be dogmatic about using television replays to decide offside, to weaken a team so fundamentally by sending off their goalkeeper in doubtful circumstances was an intolerable situation.

"Somebody invented the telephone and they were doubtless a few sceptics then," Gregory said. "The least the FA can now do is to look at the video and, if they have any sense, rule out the one-match ban which would deprive us of Oakes against Middlesbrough on January 9."

The crux of the matter is Fila's inflexibility, handed down through the Football Association and Premier League, that covers officials on the field. The real repercussion could be the human cost in Oakes. Perhaps now, starting this afternoon, he will show the qualities of resolve and mental courage and put the misfortune behind him. A call to his father, Alan, the former Manchester City midfielder player, will begin to put the game and life into perspective.

Alan Oakes was a contemporary of John McGrath, a tough defender for Newcastle United and Southampton. McGrath, 60, collapsed and died in his home on Christmas Day and he was due to be on commentary duty at the Blackburn v Villa match for a Lancashire radio station. The capricious fate of Boxing Day pales into insignificance.

rely on Adam Rachel, an even less experienced third-choice goalkeeper. Now you see that one aberration during the match at Ewood Park could cost Villa a month of uncertainty in the prime position of goalkeeper: Chelsea, Manchester United, Arsenal, even Leeds United, will monitor the situation with relish.

How did it happen? Oakes was sent off not for a foul, not for abusing the spirit of the game, not even for forgetting the rules. In the 54th minute, reaching above his head to a ball swirling around in that capricious wind, he got both hands to it. But the momentum carried him forward and, as he saw with a look of horror the 18-yard line beneath his feet, he instantly took his hands off the ball.

It matters not whether the television cameras proved or disproved whether Oakes had contact with the ball six inches either side of the line. It should not have mattered that Dave Horlick, the referee's assistant, was poorly positioned but had raised his flag for an infringement. Dermot Gallagher, the referee, was, in that instant a frightened man of the law, an arbiter who presumed that he had no discretion.

He issued the red card, as Fifa, the world governing body, appears to say that he



Gregory, the Villa manager, believes video technology may help to prevent injustices caused by bad decisions

the 2-0 win over Southampton on Boxing Day. Despite Poyet's absence, Gianluca Vialli, the Chelsea manager, can embrace the availability of Graeme Le Saux, Roberto Di Matteo and Marcel Desailly for United's visit.

After their 3-1 victory at Middlesbrough, Liverpool's players awoke yesterday to a rebuke for their antics at a Christmas party. The high-spirited affair, splashed across the front page of a Sunday newspaper, prompted an official response yesterday. "The club has reminded all players of their responsibilities as public

figures and as representatives of Liverpool Football Club," a statement said. "The matter will be dealt with internally."

In an encounter in the Premier League's basement, Nottingham Forest, who host Southampton, are hoping to sever a winless sequence spanning 16 games, which matches an unwelcome club record. Forest are again without Pierre van Hooijdonk, who is suspended, while Matthew Le Tissier, with a calf injury, and Stuart Ripley, with a damaged knee, are doubtful for Southampton.

Arsenal suffer striking blow to title charge

By JULIAN MUSCAT

ARSENAL'S designs on a second successive FA Carling Premiership title must be sketched, in the short term, without Nicolas Anelka, whose absence from the side visiting Charlton Athletic today will exacerbate his team's inability to score goals away from Highbury.

third place, although a meagre haul of six goals in nine away games affords Charlton encouragement in their quest to break a six-game losing streak.

Table with 11 columns: Club, P, W, D, L, F, A, Pts. Rows include Chelsea, Aston Villa, Manchester United, Leeds United, Arsenal, and Middlesbrough.

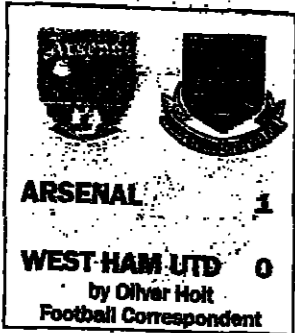
clubs are in action tomorrow. Chelsea, the leaders, must entertain Manchester United without Gustavo Poyet, their leading scorer. Poyet was carried off with a knee injury during

Advertisement for Thomas Pink Shirts. Features the brand name 'PINK' in large letters, 'Thomas Pink, Savoy Street, LONDON' below it, and 'Thomas Pink SHIRTS For men and women Sale Now On'. It lists various retail partners across London and other cities like Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow.

FA Carling Premiership: Wright's return to Highbury brings no joy to him or West Ham

Mr Saturday Night falls flat

Chelsea talk with one voice when it matters



IAN WRIGHT always finds acres of common ground with the guests he invites on his late night chat show.



DAVID JACOBS

Bould, a tower of strength in the Arsenal defence throughout the game, times a sliding tackle to perfection to dispossess Hartson, a former team-mate

The timing of McGowan's appearance was rather unfortunate for Wright.

At 35, Wright surely needs to concentrate wholeheartedly on his football and cut down his fringe activities if he wants to prolong his career.

Wright has become the walking, talking personification of football as a showbiz spin-off.

goalscorer and an enduring folk hero. Not even that could eke a dying burst from Wright.

On Saturday, Wright found himself against the equivalent of a team of Clive Andersons and Angus Deaytons, men who make their points sharply and succinctly as they go for the jugular.

In the second half, things improved marginally because of the efforts of the indomitable Frank Lampard and the thoroughly unfluffed Rio Ferdinand.

had a couple of chances. If it had been showbiz, he would have put them both away in front of the Clock End and wheeled away, unveiling the message on the T-shirt that was undoubtedly under his kit.

In that respect, we were almost grateful to the reality of football, to the talent that it has to treat all impostors in the same way.

If anyone benefited from the emotion of Wright's return — it was certainly not West Ham — it was the man who effectively forced him out of the club in the first place.

Nicolas Anelka, the young Frenchman, whose emergence showed Wright on to the sidelines in the second half of last season, played like a man possessed for the opening half hour on Saturday.

Hislop, Arsenal's mastery of their visitors was breathtaking. Their only failing was their neglect to turn their dominance into goals.

Time and again, Bergkamp, whose approach play was near-perfect, wasted the chance to score.

Hislop. At half-time, Arsenal led by the unfeasibly slim margin of Overmars' eighth-minute shot that pitched just in front of Hislop as he dived and bounced through his hands.

In the second half, Arsenal grew more cautious and Lampard and Ferdinand master-minded a fightback. In former times, Wright might have sensed his chance.

Bassett's forward planning benefits United



Johnsen: two goals and little to do in defence

LIKE a serial adulterer, Dave Bassett was thinking about the next potential conquest.

"There comes a time," Bassett said, "when Monday becomes more important than today."

It was hardly a blip either, this being Forest's sixteenth game in the league without a

win, and, to cap it all, Bassett admitted that he had thought it was a good time to inflict some damage on United.

United were hesitant and their passing in the first 20 minutes was close to abysmal.

What began as an afternoon of promise for Forest became one of fulfilment for



by Alyson Rudd

Only the odd shaft of light illuminated this match, fleeting glimpses of how chillingly murderous United can be.

There was little else to droop over. Johnsen and Berg performed seamlessly in the absence of Jaap Stam and Gary Neville, but, given the increasingly diluted efforts of Forest, a pair of fireside slippers just might have done just as well.

face a Chelsea side who, far from wilting, become more robust as the game progresses.

You could forgive United if their thoughts, too, had drifted to their next game and certainly this encounter petered out in sorry, faltering fashion.

Bassett said that he would resign if he felt the club would prosper as a consequence.

Leeds deepen disenchantment

"YOU'RE not sexy any more," the segment of Leeds United supporters sang at St James' Park.

They smouldered with wrath and frustration. Few of the Newcastle players are capable of living on the same scale as the audience's grand passion for the club.

It was like hearing a father chuckle affectionately while recounting the foibles of his children. He does so in the conviction that they will grow up strong and that they will grow up strong and successful.

Although the forward, 20, had opened the scoring and created the second goal, the manager felt that he had not run at defenders when

enough with the ball. It was intoxicating to consider a result on this scale as this a mere promissory note.

Jonathan Woodgate, 18, cannot be rested while Lucas Radebe and others are absent, but not even Alan Shearer's muscle could quite dislodge his poise in this game.

When pressed back, Leeds could rely on meticulous technique and exuberant reflex saves from Nigel Martyn, who is surely the best goalkeeper in England at present.

Kewell was less impressive in his shooting after 62 minutes, but Shay Given, the goalkeeper, misled and - the inexhaustible

struck goal in stoppage time. Newcastle, irresolute in defence and subjugated in midfield, were of little help to Shearer and Duncan Ferguson, who were playing together for the first time, even if their doggedness had its impact.

Martyn was superb in turning over a 25-yarder from Stephen Glass and a header by Nikolaos Dabizas. Another header, from Shearer, was cleared from the line by David Hopkin.

When the game was still goalless, Shearer wasted their single chance, turning the ball wide after Woodgate had, uncharacteristically, miscued a header.

That brought the best moments for his side.

if it was freely admitted that Leeds had been too much for Newcastle, the manager seemed to be convinced that he could put all his other adversaries to the sword.

So great is Ruud Gullit's delight in being Ruud Gullit that he cannot quite decide whether criticism is an absurdity or an outrage.

There was a trace of justice in Gullit's objection that no one complains that Bryan Robson lives in Manchester while working at Middlesbrough, even if commuting from a different country seems to be an extreme arrangement.

To suggest that Emile Heskey suffered by comparison is unfair to the burgeoning talent of a different type of striker.

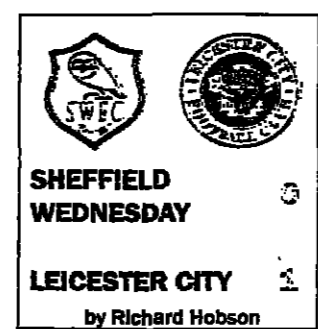
Cottee provides the quality to finish off Wednesday

AT SOME stage in the near future — perhaps even against Blackburn Rovers this afternoon — one of the most prolific strikers of the past 15 years will score a goal that elevates him into the company of the very best.

No 198 arrived after 33 minutes at Hillsborough on Saturday, utilising the cottages that have made him such an effective forward: anticipation, acceleration and composure.

Cottee first gambled that Hinchcliffe's header would lack the power to reach Srinick, then he found the pace to nip in ahead of the goalkeeper.

Benito Carbone will return in the game away to Aston Villa today, having served a suspension. It is just as well, as the future of Paolo Di Canio remains in considerable doubt after the club imposed another two-week ban without pay for his failure to appear on Boxing Day.



by Richard Hobson

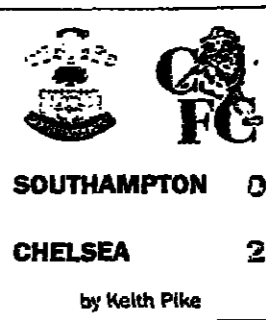
ous doubt whether he is committed to the club."

In most eyes, the matter has gone beyond doubt and, while Wilson tried to retain an appearance of serenity, it was perhaps revealing that, in stretching his legs, he accidentally kicked a wastepaper basket as he uttered the Hoddle-esque words: "I do not get furious with people. I am disappointed."

Although Wednesday improved in the second half, chances rarely materialised from an increased share of possession.

There was not really a big difference between the sides, but those chances have to be taken," Wilson said.

LEICESTER CITY (4-4-2) P. Srinick — P. Adson, E. Thomas, D. Walker, S. Hinchcliffe — I. Abundis, M. C. Beckson, G. Brown, W. Zenga, D. Selous, P. Bus — H. Humphreys, G. O'Brien, G. A. Beal.



by Keith Pike

THE conditions were foul, the opposition desperate (figuratively to begin with, literally by the end), but the response impressive and the victory emphatic.

The disbelievers would say it is inconceivable that a team drawn from so many different cultures, and with so many victims of its manager's selection policy, could achieve the dressing-room harmony needed to win the title, yet it was apparent on Saturday that Chelsea's ten nationalities were playing with one purpose.

Salaries of up to £2 million a year no doubt help players to concentrate, but, according to Graham Rix, the Chelsea coach, the cynics should worry less about bank balances and more about what they see with their own eyes and look at the FA Carling Premiership table, which Chelsea lead for the second weekend in succession.

"Everyone gives us stick and goes on about the foreigners, but they forget that football is an international language," he said.

Rix also explained how just one word from "the gaffer", Gianluca Vialli, can be enough to motivate his charges.

"That was Luca's buzzword... go out there, be a man, stand up," Rix said.



Poyet, later carried off with a knee injury, turns away after clinically slotting home the second Chelsea goal

Whatever word that Vialli chooses tomorrow, when Chelsea lock horns with Manchester United for the second time in a fortnight, it will not be "revenge".

Desailly, Di Matteo and Le Saux all unavailable on Saturday, will be back as they seek to extend their unbeaten league run to 19 games, although the chances of Poyet playing appear to be slim.

The Liverpool, whose disciplined, energetic and occasionally inspired display typified Chelsea's performance — indeed, their season — suffered a painful knee injury courtesy of Colletier's crude challenge.

"Quality players all over the pitch," Dave Jones, the Southampton manager, said, with a mixture of admiration and envy. The fan club of Chelsea's foreign legion had gained another recruit.

Scottish Premier League: Champions warm up for Old Firm meeting with decisive victory

Celtic finish with a flourish

O'Neil refuses to see pitfalls of Rangers' penalty clause

Dundee 0 Celtic 3

By Phil Gordon

CELTIIC ended 1998 as they began it — with style, vigour and a liberal sprinkling of goals. Twelve months ago, Rangers were the first victims of a year that brought the Scottish Premier League title and this victory will give Celtic hope that they can repeat the act when they meet their Old Firm rivals next Sunday at Ibrox.



Riseth, the Celtic midfielder player, celebrates after his header, his first goal for the club, had given them a 2-0 lead against Dundee yesterday

Celtic's poor form away from home was of little consolation to Dundee, who have not fully recovered from the 6-1 mauling that they received at the hands of the champions in Glasgow eight weeks ago. Dundee almost certainly read the ominous portents of the events of the third minute and knew that this occasion would offer little ambition beyond damage limitation.

O'Donnell established Celtic's command with a goal of true beauty to finish off a move that proved to be almost too quick for the eye to follow. Paul Lambert switched play to a side the centre circle with a clever back-heal and Moravcik took up the ball and swung a wonderful diagonal pass as O'Donnell chased between the central defenders, Irvine and Smith. The Celtic midfielder player took the ball down on the run with one touch and, with another, stabbed a shot past Robert Douglas.

failed to capture the imagination of Celtic supporters since joining in September, but he rose with the confidence of a habitual scorer to glance Lambert's cross from the left beyond Douglas for his first goal in 12 games for the club. After that, Celtic simply turned on a show of style and power as every player in the side sought to get his name on the scoresheet. Stubbs's header was cleaved over the bar by Douglas and Mahe should have done better

than fire his shot against Smith as Celtic gained their sixth corner on the half-hour, but the full back was searching for glory rather than a colleague. Celtic had the ball in the net for a third time, in the 47th minute, after Burchill eluded his marker, but the effort was disallowed, by Willie Young, the referee, for handball. Perhaps sensing impending ignominy, Dundee then threw men forward and produced

their best passage of play in the 57th minute. Celtic swept down the left wing, with Burchill's pass releasing O'Donnell, who delivered a fine cross back into the path of Larsson. His header seemed to be destined to provide his eighteenth goal of the season until Irvine, the Dundee defender, hooked the ball off the goalpost. Unfortunately, he succeeded only in striking his clearance against the back of Douglas and into the net to ensure that the goalkeeper was the author of an own goal. And, the Dundee substitute, saw a fierce late shot blocked by Gould, the Celtic goalkeeper, which summed up his team's night.

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JOHN O'NEIL, the St Johnstone midfielder player, probably knew the second that his penalty struck the junction of post and crossbar at Ibrox that Rangers were going to make him pay a heavy price. However, there was no tears of anguish afterwards. Instead, O'Neil provided an object lesson in being calm and philosophical after the 1-0 defeat by the Scottish Premier League leaders.

Sandy Clark, the St Johnstone manager, could not quite share O'Neil's analytical processes. Clark knew that the miss had probably cost the Perth club their first win at Ibrox in 27 years, particularly as Rangers were already reduced to ten men by the dismissal of Colin Hendry. "We will never have a better chance of winning here than this," he muttered.

However, O'Neil was as courageous in his responsibilities to the press as he was to his team. "George O'Boyle normally takes our penalties, but he was missing and no one else wanted to, so I volunteered," he said. "I last took one a couple of years ago, but I don't know if the lads will let me take another for a few more years now." O'Neil could have blamed Paddy Connolly, his teammate, instead. Had Connolly found the net in the 48th minute, instead of trying to beat Hendry not twice but three times, after initially rounding Stefan Klos, the new Rangers goalkeeper, then the Scotland captain might not have been given the chance to thrust up an arm, which Dick Advocaat, the Rangers manager, described as "an excellent save".

were simply a precursor to the gales that forced Scotland to batter down the hatches on Saturday night. Sergio Porrini, though, managed to inflict his own damage for Rangers before then. Porrini, the former Juventus defender, brought the house down with a searing shot into the roof of the net in the 71st minute to retrieve three points for Rangers that looked highly improbable after Hendry's dismissal had encouraged St Johnstone to swamp Advocaat's team, hitting the crossbar three times.

Kilmarnock managed to protect the second place that they have made their property this season, despite even worse conditions at Rugby Park. Gary Holt's winning goal in the 26th minute against Heart of Midlothian might not have come on another day, but the buffeting wind and rain played their part in the mistake by Gilles Rousset, the visiting goalkeeper.

Stephen McMillan admitted that he received help with his curling free kick that launched Motherwell's 2-0 defeat of Dundee United, saying: "I knew the wind would take the ball away from the goalkeeper. Those was the worst conditions I have played in." Aberdeen found a safe haven with the 2-1 victory at Dunfermline. Eoin Jess's tenth goal of the season provided Aberdeen with their third successive victory under Paul Heggarty, the caretaker manager, which moved them into the calmer location of middle of the table.

Raynor free kick makes it five wins in a row for Kettering

KETTERING Town head for their Football Conference match at Stevenage Borough this evening fortified by the 1-0 win over Hednesford Town at Rockingham Road on Boxing Day that kept them four points clear at the head of the table.

Victory — Kettering's fifth in succession in the Conference — was as hard-earned as might be expected against opponents that went into the contest on the back of a nine-match unbeaten run. Hednesford's hopes might have been lifted by the dismissal of Matt Fisher, of Kettering, in the 27th minute for elbowing Stuart Lake, but they themselves finished the match with only nine men. Lee Colkin was sent off for a second bookable offence — also involving the use of an elbow — in the 38th minute and Jimmy Kelly followed four minutes from the finish after being shown his second yellow card. Kettering had the wind at

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL BY WALTER GAMMIE

their backs in the second half and Paul Raynor made use of it when he drove home a free kick from 30 yards to score the winning goal in the 77th minute.

Stevenage played with more conviction than they had the previous week in losing 3-0 at Cheltenham Town as they

forced a goalless draw against Rushden and Diamonds before the biggest crowd of the day, 4,319, at Broadhall Way. Jan Feuer, signed by Rushden on three months' loan from the Major Soccer League in the United States, was the busier of the goalkeepers in the first half. Rushden had the better of the second half — but it was an afternoon that did not do much to enhance either of the sides' championship ambitions.

It was left to Cheltenham to keep up the pace in pursuit of Kettering after they saw off Telford United 3-0 at Bucks Head. The old firm of Jason Eaton and Dale Watkins, reunited the previous week, were once again both on the scoresheet. Cheltenham travel today to Aggborough to take on Kidderminster Harriers, who were buoyed by a 1-0 victory on Boxing Day over Hereford United, courtesy of a goal

in the 89th minute by Clinton Thomas, making his home debut after signing from Evesham Town.

A goal by Anton Thomas in the 43rd minute brought Nuneaton Borough a 1-0 win over Atherstone United and kept them steaming ahead in pursuit of the Dr Martens League title and a return to the Conference after a 12-year interval. Although Atherstone won both legs of their league cup meeting with their local rivals, they had also lost earlier in the season at Manor Road in the FA Cup. Altrincham, eager to end their two-season spell out of the Conference, made a shaky start to the season, but they completed a long and painful haul to the top of the UniBond League when they displaced Worksop Town. While Worksop, the long-time leaders, were losing 3-1 at Gainsborough, Trinity, Altrincham completed a 3-0 victory over Runcom at Canal Street.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By Robert Sheehan, Bridge Correspondent

This is a deal played at the St John's Wood Bridge Club. It was related to me by North, a well-known character on the London bridge scene, universally known by his first name Stefan. His surname is so difficult to spell and pronounce that even his fellow Poles don't use it. He tells me he has known the other three players at the table for a combined 132 years.

Bridge hand diagram showing Dealer North, Love all, Rubber bridge, and card layouts for both sides.

Contract: Four Spades by South. Lead: ten of diamonds.

Stefan's opening Three Hearts was on the light side, but his raise of Three Spades to Four Spades was immaculate. It looks as though declarer has an easy ride after a diamond to the king and a second to ruff a second club with the queen of spades. Now he continued with a diamond from dummy and the roof fell in. East ruffed, cashed the king of clubs and led a low heart. Declarer ruffed low, West overruffed and gave East a second diamond ruff. Finally a third round of hearts promoted West's jack of spades. The defence had made four trump tricks and the king of clubs for two off. The declarer's mistake was not to count his tricks. Even if he has a trump loser he needs only one club ruff. So best is to cross to the queen of spades and, when all follow, play a club to the ace and ruff a club. Now after a heart ruff declarer can play trumps, and if he has a loser there he still makes five tricks in spades, three in diamonds, a club and a club ruff.

WORD-WATCHING section with a list of words and their definitions, including SHARAWAGGI, QUIACH, and DUNNAGE.

KEENE on CHESS

By Raymond Keene, Chess Correspondent

Kensington has been the scene of chess activity recently with several tournaments being held; for example the Kensington Congress of November 29-30 and the Kensington Rapid-play held on Sunday, December 13.

Chess board diagram for a game between White: Adimbola Adelaja and Black: Richard Tozer, showing the Sicilian Defence.

White: Adimbola Adelaja Black: Richard Tozer Kensington Rapid Play 1998 Sicilian Defence

WINNING MOVE section with a chess board diagram and a list of moves for a winning position.

TODAY'S FOOTBALL FIXTURES table listing various football matches across different leagues and divisions.

Other fixtures, page 42

Solution on page 44

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Arsenal vs West Ham, Aston Villa vs Liverpool, Tottenham vs Coventry.

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Everton vs Derby, Middlesbrough vs Liverpool, Southampton vs Chelsea.

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Sheffield Wed vs Leicester, Wimbledon vs Charlton, Newcastle vs Leeds.

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Blackburn vs Aston Villa, Coventry vs Tottenham, Bolton vs Bradford.

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Birmingham vs Sheffield Utd, Bolton vs Bradford, Crewe vs Bury.

NATIONAL

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like League of Wales, FA HVP National League, Press & Journal Highland League.



Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Chelsea vs Aston Villa, Man Utd vs Leeds, Arsenal vs Ipswich.

Nationwide Football League

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Sunderland vs Ipswich, Walsley vs Walsley, Bradford vs Bradford.

SCOTLAND

PREMIER LEAGUE

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Dundee vs Aberdeen, Dundee vs Dundee, Dundee vs Dundee.

FIRST DIVISION

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Aberdeen vs Aberdeen, Aberdeen vs Aberdeen, Aberdeen vs Aberdeen.

SECOND DIVISION

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Blackpool vs Wigan, Blackpool vs Wigan, Blackpool vs Wigan.

THIRD DIVISION

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Alton vs Queens Park, Alton vs Queens Park, Alton vs Queens Park.

GOALSCORERS

Table listing goal scorers for various matches, including names like J. Alton, M. Owen, and D. Duffin.



John Aloisi, right, of Coventry City, evades the challenge of Steve Carr, of Tottenham Hotspur, on his way to scoring the equaliser in their 1-1 draw at Highfield Road on Saturday. Match report, page 28. Photograph: Ben Radford / Allsport.

CONFERENCE AND NON-LEAGUE

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Doncaster vs Leek, Kettering vs Hednesford.

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Lincoln vs Lincoln, Lincoln vs Lincoln.

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Doncaster vs Leek, Kettering vs Hednesford.

CONFERENCE

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Doncaster vs Leek, Kettering vs Hednesford.

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Sunderland vs Ipswich, Walsley vs Walsley.

SCOTLAND

Table with 3 columns: Match number, Home team, Away team. Includes matches like Dundee vs Aberdeen, Dundee vs Dundee.

GOALSCORERS

Table listing goal scorers for various matches, including names like J. Alton, M. Owen, and D. Duffin.

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Table listing goal scorers for various matches, including names like J. Alton, M. Owen, and D. Duffin.

VERNONS LOTTERY FOOTBALL GAME

RESULTS FROM SATURDAY'S MATCHES: There were ten lots drawn: Coventry v Tottenham; Blackpool v Wigan; Walsley v Walsley; York v Burnley; Barnet v Plymouth; Leyton Orient v Swenese; Rochdale v Carlisle; Alderley v Raith; Greenock Morton v Clydebank; Stenhousemuir v East Stirling.

POOLS CHECK

Table with 10 columns representing different pools and their respective results.

GOALSCORERS

Table listing goal scorers for various matches, including names like J. Alton, M. Owen, and D. Duffin.

CALENDAR OF SPORT 1999

Can England beat the world?



Jeremy Guscott races past a despairing South Africa defence to score for England in their 13-7 win over the world champions earlier this month — a result England will be looking to repeat next year. Photograph: Glyn Kirk/Action Plus

Rob Hughes looks ahead to the highlights of 1999 — and one threat to sport as a whole

Sit back and relish four cups of sporting cheer

We have seen our last Olympic Games and last football World Cup for the millennium, but four events in 1999 should still bring out that most compelling essence of sport — the spectacle of competitors striving might and mane not just for themselves but for their country.

In calendar order, they are: April 2-4, National Indoor Arena, Birmingham: Davis Cup tennis. Great Britain v United States. This is already a virtual 24,000 sell-out. It is history combined with the smell of modern millenaire gladiatorial combat, a rerun of the inaugural amateur Davis Cup—a century ago, now pitting Tim Flanagan and Greg Rusedski against, if they decide to represent their cause, Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi.

South Africa in the summer, reduced to Ashes by Christmas. England's cricketers could have no greater spur than to hear the Aussies, with almost real sympathy, lament that they would at least have liked a contest. With home advantage, albeit somewhat eroded by so many overseas players being at home in the county championships, England should at least put up a fight. If not, we will just have to be jolly good sports relishing the cavalier attitudes of Sri Lanka, the professional grit of South Africa and Australia, the wiles and flashing blades of Pakistan and the struggles of West Indians seeking to rediscover the soul of Caribbean calypso.

October, all round Great Britain, Ireland and France: the Rugby World Cup. This is what the rugby revolution is about, the challenge, in our conditions and on our terms, of the home nations and the French to the supremacy of those southern-hemisphere giants — South Africa, New Zealand, Australia.

Can England take any of them when they cross the seas less than tired? Can rugby take the strain of ever-increasing body masses thumping into what they no longer term tackles but "hits"? Can the bankrupting progression of the sport, the hugely over-

spent headlong charge into a professionalism that might be unsustainable, be given the breath of life through excitement aroused by this World Cup? Those questions and, perhaps, the central one of whether the old rugby ethos of the game for the game's sake can emerge from beneath suffocating financial pressures will set up the winter. By then, even greater his will be in the administration of sports at home and abroad. Somebody has to give new dynamism and direction to the situations vacant atop the Football Association. Somebody has to confront the ruination of sports across the planet, where, as the century draws to an end, even such leading sponsors as Coca-Cola are questioning how much longer they will pour cash into dubious and poisoned wells.

It starts with drugs. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Lausanne in February has to complete what it tentatively began six months ago, to put real resources and real teeth into a concerted assault on drugs. The IOC made an offer that it might regret — to use its gargantuan television profit pile to create an umbrella for all sports to join, once and for all, a genuine detection and punishment drive against cheating through chemical aids. It is going to cost hundreds of millions of dollars, perhaps a thousand million dollars; but can sport, the pursuit of excellence, afford to talk at the price? The IOC members are themselves tainted by accusations from within their own circles that they take bribes for votes. Fifa's World Cup bidding, in which England is a sorry part, appears to be no cleaner. And so, as a millennium closes and a new one beckons, the contamination of one of the finest pursuits on earth — man and woman competing honestly and naturally — is threatened.

ARCHERY

- Mar 14: Nations Indoor, Stoke Mandeville.
May 29-30: All British & Open Field Championships, Sussex.
Jan 5-6: UK Masters, Lilleshael.
Jan 29-30: C.I.A.M., Lilleshael.
Aug 7-8: British Target Championships, Lilleshael.
Aug 11-13: Junior European Target Championships, Lilleshael.

ATHLETICS

- Jan 2: Great North cross country world cross challenge, Durham.
Jan 17: Resolix cross country challenge, Oxford; world cross challenge, Strie.
Jan 22: Cox-Cole International cross country, Belfast.
Jan 30-31: National indoor and world championship trials, Birmingham.
Feb 5: Millrose Games indoor meeting, New York.
Feb 7: Stuttgart indoor meeting, world cross challenge, Villmouri, Portugal.
Feb 14: Iupa indoor grand prix, Birmingham; world cross challenge, Mombasa.
Feb 20: Resolix Inter-Counties cross country championships and world championship trials, Nottingham; IAAF meeting, Sydney.
Feb 21: Lavin indoor meeting, France; world cross challenge, Chiba, Japan.
Feb 26: Stockholm indoor meeting, Grand Prix I, Melbourne.
Mar 5-7: World indoor championships (Melbourne), Japan.
Mar 6: English schools cross country championships, Luton.
Mar 21: Lichon hall marathon.
Mar 26: IAAF meeting, Cape Town.
Mar 27-28: World cross country championship, Belfast.
April 3: Grand Prix II, Johannesburg.
Apr 4: Paris Marathon.
Apr 17: Stranlino half marathon.
Apr 18: Race London Marathon; Rotterdam Marathon, Netherlands.
Apr 19: Boston Marathon.
Apr 23: Grand Prix I, Rio de Janeiro.
Apr 23-25: National and world championship trials, Birmingham; international road races, Bayern.
May 8: Grand Prix I, Oostak; IAAF meeting, Marzique.
May 13: Grand Prix I, Doha.
May 15: IAAF meeting, Portland.
May 22: IAAF meeting, Kingston.
May 28: Grand Prix II, Sevilla.
May 30-31: Inter-Counties championships, Bedford.
May 30: Grand Prix I, Eugene.
May 31: Grand Prix II, Hengelo, Netherlands.
Jan 6: IAAF meeting, Stuttgart.
Jan 8: Grand Prix II, Bratislava.
Jan 10: Grand Prix II, Helsinki.
Jan 11: IAAF meeting, Nuremberg.
Jan 12: IAAF meeting, Lille.
Jan 16: Grand Prix II, Athens.

- Jan 19-20: European Cup, Paris.
Jan 24: IAAF meeting, Turin.
Jan 25-27: United States championships, Eugene.
Jan 27: Gateshead International meeting.
Jan 28: IAAF meeting, Zagreb.
Jan 30: Golden League, Oslo.
Jul 2: Grand Prix I, Luxembourg.
Jul 3: Grand Prix II, Saint Denis; IAAF meeting, Budapest.
Jul 7: Golden League, Rome.
Jul 16-18: World youth.
Jul 17: Grand Prix I, Nice.
Jul 21: Grand Prix I, Paris.
Jul 23-25: National and world championship trials, Birmingham.
Jul 26: Grand Prix I, Linz, Austria.
Jul 28: IAAF meeting, Barcelona.
Jul 29-Aug 7: World veterans championships, Gateshead.
Jul 29-Aug 1: European Under-23 championships.
Jul 30: Grand Prix I, Stockholm.
Aug 4: Golden League, Monaco.
Aug 5-6: European junior championships, Pigi.
Aug 7: Sheffield International meeting.
Aug 8: Grand Prix I, Cologne.

- Aug 11: Golden League, Zurich.
Aug 20-28: World championships, Sevilla.
Sep 1: Golden League, Brussels.
Sep 4: Great Britain v United States, Glasgow.
Sep 5: Grand Prix II, Bari, Italy.
Sep 6: Golden League, Pistoia.
Sep 11: Golden League, Munich (to be confirmed).
Sep 12: IAAF meeting, New Delhi.
Sep 28: Edinburgh Marathon, Berlin Marathon.
Oct 3: World half marathon championships (venue to be decided).
Oct 10: Great North Run, Newcastle.
Oct 24: Chicago Marathon.
Oct 30: AAA six-stage road relay, Birmingham.
Nov 21: Tokyo women's Marathon.
Dec 12: European cross country championships, Velenje, Slovenia.

- Feb 5-7: English National Championships, Haywards Heath.
Feb 13-14: Inter County championships Premier A, Telford.
Feb 13-14: Inter County championships Premier B, Loughborough.
Feb 19-21: English National Under-19 championships, Bath.
Feb 20: World Grand Prix Finals, Indonesia.
Mar 6-7: All England Veterans championships.
Mar 10-14: York All England Open championships, Birmingham.
Mar 21: Inter County championships Regional Divs, Gloucestershire.
Mar 27-28: Inter County championships, Premier A, Telford.
Apr 30: Friends Provident Grand Slam, Chester.
May 17-23: 11th World championships, Denmark.
May (to be): Friends Provident Grand Slam Final.
Sep 1-6: Olympic Test Event, Sydney, Australia.

BASEBALL

- Jul 13: All Star Game, Fenway Park, Boston.
Oct 23-30: The World Series.

BASKETBALL

- Jan 10: Sainsbury's Classic Cole National Cup finals (Sheffield Arena).
Feb 24: European championships, semi-final round, men, England v Belarus (Crystal Palace).
Feb 27: European championships, semi-final round, men, Israel v England (Tel Aviv); Danyes Dunkers All-Star Game (Newcastle Arena); Sunny Delight Three on Three semi-final round (Sheffield).
Feb 28: Sunny Delight Three on Three semi-final round (Lae Valley, London).
Mar 5-7: BUSA finals (Loughborough).
Mar 7: Sunny Delight Three on Three, semi-final round (Cardiff) and Glasgow.
Mar 12: Uni-Ball Trophy Final (NEC Birmingham).

- Mar 14: NBL first division men's all-star game (Gulford); NBL first division women's all-star game (Chesham).
Mar 21: Sunny Delight finals (Wembley Arena).
Mar 24: European Korac Cup final, first leg.
Mar 25: European Ronchetti Cup final, second leg.
Apr 6-8: Final four of Euro League, Women (Brno, Czech Republic).
Apr 13: Saporla Cup final, men (Zaragoza).
Apr 20-22: Final four of Euro League, men (Munich).
May 1-2: Bundesliga championship finals (Wembley Arena).
May 6-8: Basketball (M.E.N. Arena, Manchester).
Jun 11-20: Women's European championship finals (Katowice, Poland).
Jan 29-Jul 4: Men's European championship finals (France).

BOWLS

- Jan 2: England men's inter-club (Denny Cup) sixth round.
Jan 3-24: WBT Potters world indoor championships, Hopton-on-Sea.
Jan 7: England women's inter-club (Yellon Trophy) third round.

BILLIARDS

- Feb 22-28: British Open, Liverpool.
Mar 1-6: World Matchplay championship, Centurion Hotel, Raddock.
Jan 12-17: World Cup fifth round, Germany.
Jan 18-24: World Cup sixth round, Austria.
Jan 25-31: World Cup seventh round, Switzerland.
Feb 3-14: World championships, Italy.
Jan 2: Wales men's under 25 singles semi-finals and final, Tali Ely.
Jan 17: Men's under 25 international Wales v England, Cardiff; women's under 25 international Wales v England, Welford-on-Avon.
Jan 21: England women's inter-club fourth round.
Jan 28-31: Irish International Masters Pairs, County Antrim.
Jan 30: England men's inter-club quarter-finals.
Jan 31: All-England mixed inter-club (Egham Trophy) fourth round.
Feb 2: Wales men's singles semi-finals and final, Llanelli.
Feb 3-6: Wales International Masters, Llanelli.
Feb 4: England women's inter-club last 16, various.
Feb 6-7: England men's under 25 and over 60 singles finals, Nottingham; Wales men's Champion of Champions singles, Bodelwyddan.
Feb 10: Wales women's national championships semi-finals, Bro Myrddin.
Feb 11: Wales women's national championships finals, Bro Myrddin.
Feb 13: England men's inter-county (Liberty Trophy) semi-finals.
Feb 14: All-England max inter-club last 16.
Feb 18: England women's inter-club quarter-finals.
Feb 20: Greengauge Wales indoor club championship, Bro Myrddin.
Feb 21: All-England max inter-club quarter-finals.
Feb 25-Mar 5: England women's national indoor championships, Isca (Exeter).
Feb 27: England men's inter-club semi-finals, South Shields.
Feb 28: England men's inter-club final, South Shields; Wales men's inter-club knockout final, Cardiff.
Mar 6: England women's inter-club semi-finals and final, Isca (Exeter).
Mar 7: Greengauge Wales indoor club championship final, Frith (Prestlyn).
Mar 8-9: British men's indoor championships, Bournemouth.
Mar 10-12: British men's indoor internationals, Bournemouth.
Mar 14: Wales men's team championship semi-finals.
Mar 14-15: British women's indoor championships, Belfast.
Mar 16-18: British women's indoor internationals, Belfast.
Mar 20-21: England men's Champion of Champions singles, final, Ganton Hall.
Mar 20-21: England women's inter-club (Yvonne Trophy) semi-finals and final, Lawson Park.
Mar 21: England men's inter-club semi-finals and final, Northampton.
Mar 21-28: Atlantic Rim (outdoor) Games, Cape Town.
Mar 25-28: All-England mixed indoor fours finals, York.
Mar 28: Wales men's team championship final, Dinevir.

Continued on page 37

CALENDAR OF SPORT 1999

Boxing (continued from page 35) Mar 28-31: World men's national championships quarter-finals, Merthyr Tydfil. Apr 2-4: All-England mixed pairs-finals, Lincoln. Apr 8: Wales women's Champion of Champions singles, Cymon Valley. Apr 10-18: England men's national indoor championships, Milton Keynes.

Jan 16: Mike Tyson v Francisco Botha, Las Vegas. Jan 16: Billy Schwan (Luton, champion) in Gianni Gelli (Italy). European lightweight championship, Bethnal Green. Jan 19: David Starie (Bury) v Mike Gormley (Manchester), British super-middleweight championship, Ipswich.

Mar 13: Lemox Lewis (WBC Champion) v Evander Holyfield (WBA/WBC champion), unopposed world heavyweight title, New York. Apr 23: ABA finals. Mar 13: Croquet. May 13-16: Pret Memorial, South Africa. Jun 5-6: Home Internationals, Southwick & Compton.

Jan 12-14: World Cup, Wellington, New Zealand. Jan 19-21: Southern Cross grand prix, Sydney. Feb 27-28: National winter championships, Sheffield. Mar 5-7: Rostock grand prix, Germany.

Mar 13: Diving. Jan 12-16: World cup, Wellington, New Zealand. Jan 19-21: Southern Cross grand prix, Sydney. Feb 27-28: National winter championships, Sheffield. Mar 5-7: Rostock grand prix, Germany.

Feb 12-14: All-Ireland club semi-finals. Feb 21: National League starts. Mar 17: All-Ireland club final, Croke Park. Mar 21: National League final, Millers Place.

GOLF CALENDAR FOR 1999 THE MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIPS April 6-11: US Masters, Augusta National. Apr 12-13: US Open, Pebble Beach, California. Apr 15-18: Open Championship, Carnoustie, Scotland. Apr 23-28: US PGA Championship, Medinah, Chicago.

May 16: EHA Cup, under 15 and 18. May 25: Jock MacLennan Memorial, Milton Keynes. May 25-26: England tour to Australia. Aug 4-6: Four nations tournament, Milton Keynes (England, Australia, Holland, Spain). Aug 18-20: European championship, Germany.

Motor Rallying. Jan 17-20: Monte Carlo Rally, Monaco. Feb 12-14: Swedish Rally, Karlstad. Feb 28-29: Safari Rally, Nairobi. Mar 21-24: Portuguese Rally, Oporto.

May 22: British Open, Broomfield, Essex. May 23-24: World Cup, Milton Keynes. May 25-26: European Cup, Milton Keynes. May 27-28: World Cup, Milton Keynes.

Netball. Feb 13-14: Under 18 Inter-County tournament, Kent. Feb 22: England v South Africa, Manchester. Feb 26-28: FEWA Open, Malta. Mar 13: National Schools Finals, Roade, Sussex.

May 22: British Open, Broomfield, Essex. May 23-24: World Cup, Milton Keynes. May 25-26: European Cup, Milton Keynes. May 27-28: World Cup, Milton Keynes.



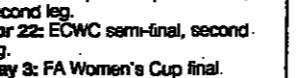
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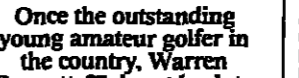
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THE TIMES CALENDAR OF SPORT 1999

RACKETS

Jan 6-10: Under 21 & Under 24, Queens...

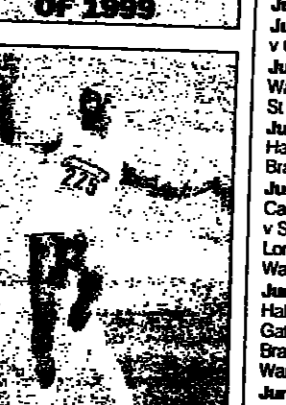
REAL TENNIS

Jan 8-10, 12-13: Professional Doubles Championship, Queens...

ROWING

Mar 12: Schools Head of the River...

RISING STARS OF 1999



Nathan Morgan is not going to medal at the world championships...

RUGBY FIVES

(Including Winchester Fives) Jan 9-10: West of England Schools...

RUGBY LEAGUE

Jan 1: Challenge match: Leeds Rhinos vs Castleford Tigers...

Feb 7: Start of First Division...

Feb 13-14: SCCC fourth round...

Mar 7: Galashiel hurler in Leeds Phoenix...

Mar 13-14: SCCC quarter-finals...

Mar 20: Sheffield in London...

Mar 27: SCCC first semi-final...

Apr 5: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Apr 12: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Apr 19: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Apr 26: Sheffield v Wakefield...

May 3: Sheffield v Wakefield...

May 10: Sheffield v Wakefield...

May 17: Sheffield v Wakefield...

May 24: Sheffield v Wakefield...

May 31: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Jun 7: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Jun 14: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Jun 21: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Jun 28: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Jul 5: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Jul 12: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Jul 19: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Jul 26: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Aug 2: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Aug 9: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Aug 16: Sheffield v Wakefield...

Aug 23: Sheffield v Wakefield...

RUGBY UNION

Oct 3: Final eliminator...

RUGBY UNION

Jan 9: Tetley's Bitter Cup, fourth round...

RUGBY UNION

Jan 9: Tetley's Bitter Cup, fifth round...

RUGBY UNION

Jan 9: Tetley's Bitter Cup, sixth round...

SAILING

Jan 2-7: World Sailing Championships, Melbourne...

SAILING

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Jan 2-7: World Sailing Championships, Melbourne...

SAILING

Jan 2-7: World Sailing Championships, Melbourne...

THE RUGBY WORLD CUP 1999

Table with columns for Pools A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and dates for matches.

SKIIING

Jan 5-6: International Ski Federation [FIS] World Cup, Kranjska Gora, Slovenia...

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SKIIING

Jan 5-6: International Ski Federation [FIS] World Cup, Kranjska Gora, Slovenia...

SNOOKER

Jan 1-19: World Alpine Ski Championships, Val di Sole, Italy...

SNOOKER

Jan 1-19: World Alpine Ski Championships, Val di Sole, Italy...

SNOOKER

Jan 1-19: World Alpine Ski Championships, Val di Sole, Italy...

SNOOKER

Jan 1-19: World Alpine Ski Championships, Val di Sole, Italy...

SNOWBOARDING

Jan 10-17: ISF European Championships, Leoben, Switzerland...

SNOWBOARDING

Jan 10-17: ISF European Championships, Leoben, Switzerland...

SNOWBOARDING

Jan 10-17: ISF European Championships, Leoben, Switzerland...

SNOWBOARDING

Jan 10-17: ISF European Championships, Leoben, Switzerland...

SWIMMING

Jan 5-6: World cup, fourth round, Beijing, China...

SWIMMING

Jan 5-6: World cup, fourth round, Beijing, China...

SWIMMING

Jan 5-6: World cup, fourth round, Beijing, China...

SWIMMING

Jan 5-6: World cup, fourth round, Beijing, China...

TRIATHLON

May 29-30: Bosworth sprint triathlon, Market Bosworth...

TRIATHLON

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TRIATHLON

May 29-30: Bosworth sprint triathlon, Market Bosworth...

TRIATHLON

May 29-30: Bosworth sprint triathlon, Market Bosworth...

WATER POLO

Mar 26-28: North Sea Cup, Buxton, England...

WATER POLO

Mar 26-28: North Sea Cup, Buxton, England...

WATER POLO

Mar 26-28: North Sea Cup, Buxton, England...

WATER SKIING

Jan 12: British Divisional Barefoot Championships first round, Spethmoor...

WATER SKIING

Jan 12: British Divisional Barefoot Championships first round, Spethmoor...

WATER SKIING

Jan 12: British Divisional Barefoot Championships first round, Spethmoor...

TABLE TENNIS

Jan 9-10: Pro-Tour grand finals, Paris...

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Jan 9-10: Pro-Tour grand finals, Paris...

SPEEDWAY

Jun 13: Overseas Final of the World Individual Championship, Kings Lynn...

SPEEDWAY

Jun 13: Overseas Final of the World Individual Championship, Kings Lynn...

TENNIS

Jan 11: Adidas International, Sydney (men and women)...

SQUASH

Jan 9-6: Squash World Cup, Nottingham...

WINDSURFING

Apr 2-6: National Racing Circuit 1, Marazion...

WINDSURFING

Apr 2-6: National Racing Circuit 1, Marazion...

job a res... hair... simple... drive... on... course... WKEY...shire... drive... on... course... WKEY...shire... drive... on... course...

Brighton draw from revival

ACROSS

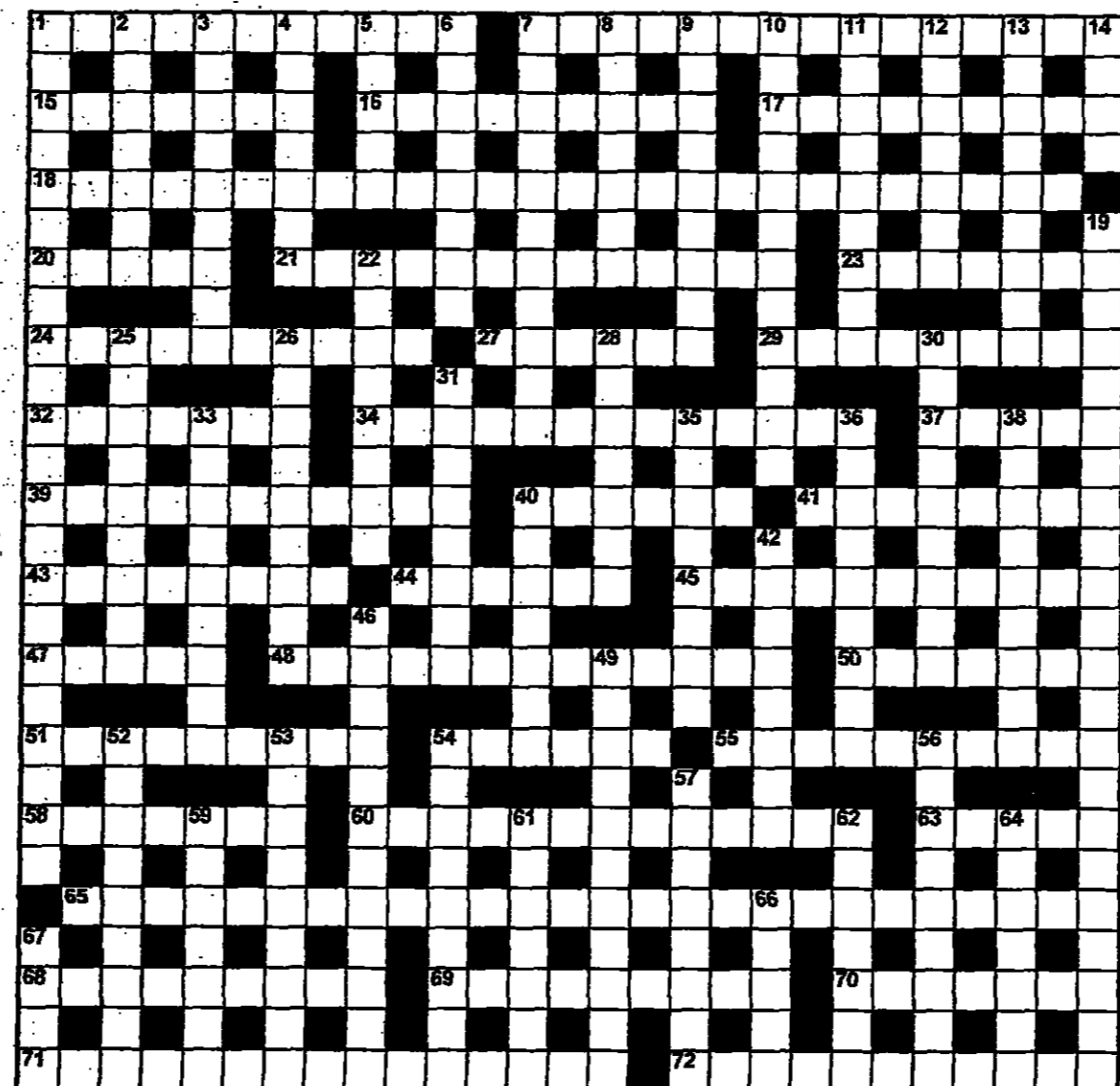
- 1 A delightful way of speaking... 7 Sound correct so perhaps make... 15 One getting a sight better in... 16 To soldiers, meeting battle...

DOWN

- 1 Employ a man, if you want... 2 Shark grabs head of porpoise... 3 Heroic tale complete, except for...

BANK HOLIDAY JUMBO CROSSWORD 202

In our Bank Holiday Jumbo Crossword competition, a prize of £100 will be awarded for the first correct solution opened on Thursday, January 21, 1999.



NAME: ADDRESS: POSTCODE:

Times Two Bank Holiday Jumbo

There is no prize for this crossword. The solution will be published on Monday, January 4

ACROSS

- 1 Boy-king of Egypt, fabulous tomb (11) 7 Unco-operative resistance (15) 15 Make good damaged mortar (7) 16 Losing resolve (9) 17 One falsely directing (9) 18 Determination brings success (5,6,1,4,6,1,3) 20 Excel (5) 21 One cutting both ways (3-5,5) 23 Young frog (7) 24 Makes speechless (10) 27 Raincloud; saintly light (6) 29 Type of jet aircraft (9) 32 Making paper shapes (7) 34 Phone-line supporter (9,4) 37 Mitigated (5) 39 In feeling manner (11) 40 Casual statement (6) 41 Coming to ruin (8) 43 With passion (8) 44 Side of page (6) 45 Washington museum (11) 47 Sixth root of 729 (5) 48 Weapon directed in flight (6,7) 50 Upset, intrude on (7) 51 Well thought of (9) 54 Tiny fish; something insignificant (6) 55 Eg bicycle, moped (3-7) 58 Craftsman (7) 60 One enjoying squash-like game (7,6) 63 Softly (mus.) (5) 65 Someone had blundered poem (3,6,2,3,5,7) 68 Disposed of more cheaply (9) 69 Of the statistics of risk (9) 70 Burn (body) (7) 71 Made over-reactive (15) 72 Pitch maintenance team (6,5)

DOWN

- 1 Persever with dud investment (5,4,5,5,3) 2 Midsummer Marriage composer (7) 3 Sounds in wings (6,3) 4 Ace (marksman) (7) 5 Grass-cutter (5) 6 Vehicle's left (8) 7 Arrogant, excessive (11) 8 Protects (7) 9 Pious, just (9) 10 Approval (12) 11 One vetting (9) 12 Green gem (7) 13 Attempt (9) 14 Indian lady's garment (4) 19 Wastefully duplicate assistant's work (4,1,3,3,4,7) 22 Julian (dating) (3,5) 25 UK by post (4,5) 26 UK standard (5,4) 28 High-class Hindu (7) 30 Workers; maths symbols (9) 31 Avoid risk (4,4) 33 Co-ordination; straight arrangement (9) 35 Straitened circumstances (8) 36 Cosmetic; whoa-seedy (anag.) (3-6) 38 Of religion (9) 40 Course of diet, therapy (7) 42 Donate (4,4) 46 Hose-equipped forces (4,8) 49 Union rep (4,7) 52 Roughly repaired (7,2) 53 S India city; no algebra (anag.) (9) 54 One-millionth of power unit (9) 56 Void (9) 57 Intertwining (hair) (8) 59 More safe (7) 61 Large properties; large cars (7) 62 One (orig. river) decisively crossed (7) 64 State, Montgomery its capital (7) 66 Word of greeting (5) 67 Pour out at speed (4)

The Times Two Concise Crossword is on page 48

Court of Appeal

Law Report December 28 1998

Court of Appeal

Judge did not find facts

Heffer and Another v Tiffin Green (A Firm) Before Lord Justice Nourse, Lord Justice Henry and Lord Justice Robert Walker. Judgment December 17. Failures by the trial judge hearing a professional negligence action against accountants involving serious allegations of submitting false partnership accounts to the Revenue...

LORD JUSTICE HENRY said that the case was a difficult one that arose out of a remarkable factual background. The plaintiff's case turned on a stark issue of fact: whether they had known that the contents of the partnership were being understood by their accountants.

documents were crucial in assessing the commercial realities against which the witnesses' credit should be tested. Their evidence, as the judge said, "there to be read" was no reason for omitting them.

This was not a case of fraud, but the knowing submission of false accounts to the Revenue was a serious matter. Clearly Mr Heffer plaintiff was an attractive and persuasive witness.

Regina v Goodwin Regina v O'B Regina v H Before Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, Mr Justice Forbes and Mr Justice Harrison. Judgment December 8. All offences of wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm, contrary to section 18 of the Offences against the Person Act 1861, were of great seriousness and would almost always attract a custodial sentence.

ERAS GALE RACING v COMMISSIONERS OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE Before Mr Justice Carnwath. Judgment December 2. Although the Commissioners of Customs and Excise had power under section 73(1) of the Value Added Tax Act 1994 to make an assessment of VAT to the best of their judgment, no challenge could be made to the validity of a reduced assessment before a VAT tribunal on the ground that it had not been made according to best judgment.

Best judgment test does not apply to VAT tribunal. The Queen's Bench Division in a reserved judgment allowing an appeal from the decision of the London VAT Tribunal on July 14, 1998 on assessments in VAT due from Elias Gale Racing.

the offender the less the justification in treating him exactly as if he were an adult. It had to be recognised that an effective means of protecting the public in the future was to reform a criminal whether young or old.

Live-link apt for child abduction evidence

Regina v McAndrew-Bingham Before Lord Justice Evans, Mr Justice Hooper and Judge Dyer. Judgment December 18. The offence of attempted child abduction under section 2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984 was an offence which came within the scope of section 32(2)(a) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 being an offence which involves an assault on a person or the use of force or the threat of injury to a person...

LORD JUSTICE EVANS said that the appellant had been convicted of two offences of attempted child abduction. In one case the complainant was a girl aged 15 and in the other a girl aged 15 and in the other a girl aged 15 and in the other a girl aged 15.

LR 412) that there were sound policy reasons for giving the definition a broad rather than a narrow and literal interpretation and extending the use of video and live-link facilities "wherever the child is likely to be traumatised by confrontation with the accused".

the offender the less the justification in treating him exactly as if he were an adult. It had to be recognised that an effective means of protecting the public in the future was to reform a criminal whether young or old.

Japan lays blame for recession at own door

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN TOKYO

IN A striking admission of error, the Japanese Government yesterday published a report blaming official inaction and delay over the past decade for triggering the country's deepest recession since the Second World War.

The year-end report by the Economic Planning Agency (EPA) detailed the failure of government private companies to come quickly to grips with the collapse of the speculative "bubble" economy of the 1980s.

Creditors' meeting called

CREDITOR banks will meet today to discuss calling in loans from LG Semicon, which is accused of resisting government efforts to modernise big businesses in South Korea.

President Kim Dae Jung wants LG Semicon to merge with Hyundai Electronics in response to a global glut of computer chips. But LG is resisting a recommendation that Hyundai should take control of the merged company.

The collapse in asset prices left behind a massive debt problem that has hobbled the Japanese financial system.

But instead of moving quickly to resolve the bad loans, government and bank officials decided to "leave the embarrassing problem untouched" and hope for a recovery in prices, the report said.

That recovery never came. Instead, the burst of the bubble brought a combined capital loss of 840 trillion yen (£4.3 trillion) between 1990 and 1996 to businesses and households, about 1.7 times the nation's gross domestic product in 1996, the EPA said.



Setback: GKN, the engineering company whose chief executive is C. K. Chow, above, suffered a setback when the US Department of Justice requested more information about its \$333 million (£318.5 million) takeover of Interlake Corp, a US powdered metals supplier. The Interlake offer, announced on December 7, is scheduled to expire January 8.

Britain 'puts jobs at risk' by staying outside euro

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

A MILLION jobs are at risk while Britain remains outside of the European single currency, one of the biggest unions has warned.

Research by the AEEU suggests that 750,000 jobs which have been created by inward investment could be in jeopardy if the UK continues to go it alone.

The union is to stage a joint conference with IG Metall, Germany and Europe's biggest union, on the consequences of trading outside EMU in February.

Curtain goes up on City after stress of the dress rehearsal

Clients of Andersen Consulting have seen dramas ahead of the new currency, reports Jason Nissé

Paul Cantwell cannot remember when he last had a weekend off. As head of the euro practice at Andersen Consulting, he has been spending his Saturdays and Sundays at the firm's clients, which tend to be large City investment banks.

The Euro and me

what will be a new business environment. The approaches differ massively. "The Americans have been much more forward-looking," he said.

guys who try and work the whole 48 hours, and when that happens, errors occur," Mr Cantwell said.

Through he and his staff at the management consultancy allowed themselves a break over the Christmas weekend, new year will be spent frantically adjusting computer systems for the new European currency.

Once the strategies were sorted, it was down to the nitty gritty of physical preparations. The dress rehearsals have thrown up quite a few issues which Mr Cantwell and his clients did not expect.

Unlike many of the 50,000 people expected to have to work in the City over the conversion weekend, Mr Cantwell has not booked a hotel or arranged to stay with friends to save having to go home.

Mr Cantwell, though, does not mind. He has spent three years preparing for this day. "The first 18 months were like having a dialogue with the deaf," he said.

Even as people realised that the euro was coming, there was an underestimation of what it would mean. "You found quite a lot of people in the US and the UK asking: 'Isn't this just another currency?'"



Paul Cantwell persuades clients of need for euro strategy

Rover sues Chilean distributor for \$1.33m

BY ADAM JONES

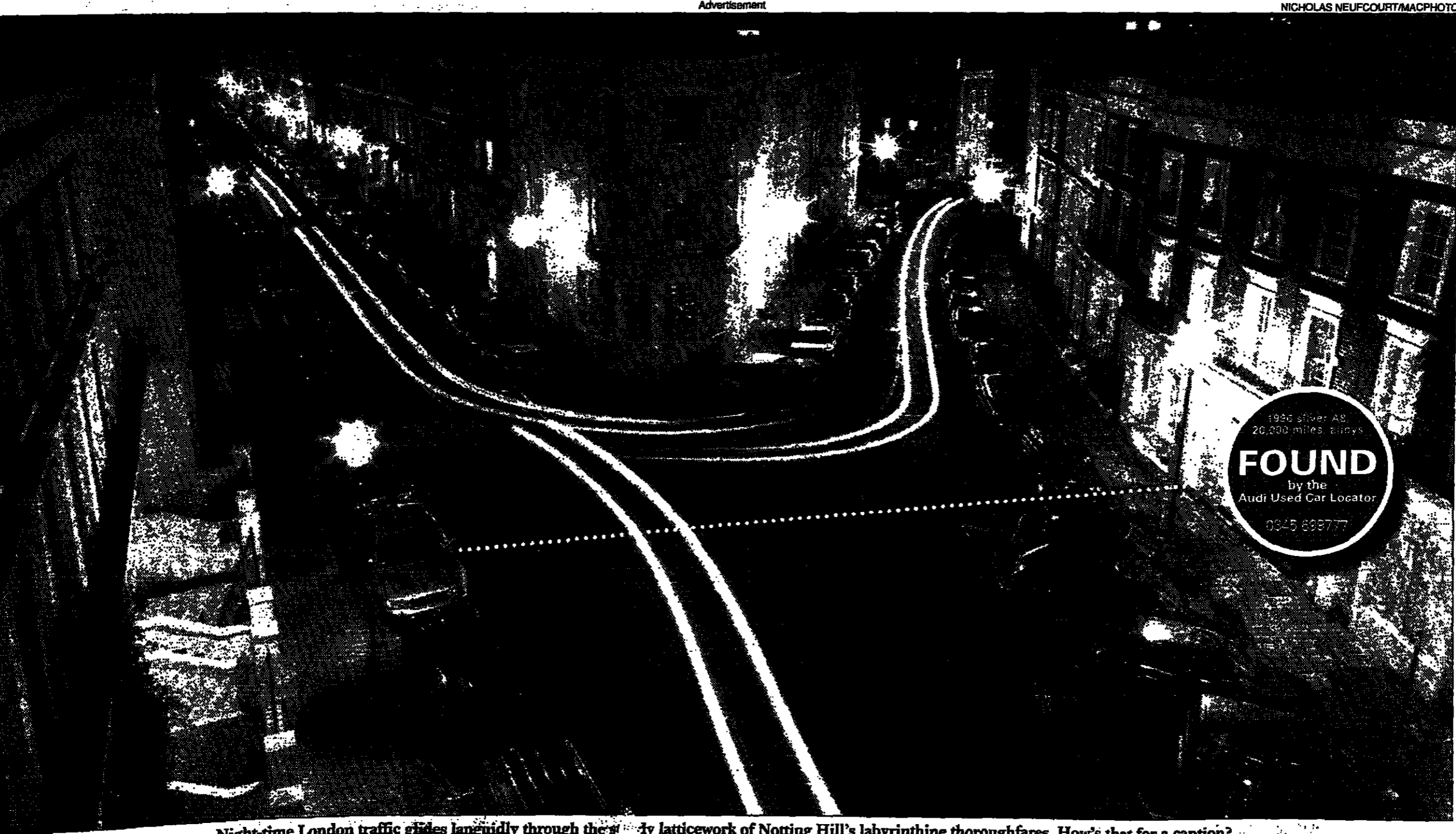
ROVER, the loss-making UK subsidiary of BMW, is suing a distributor of its cars in Chile, claiming that it is owed \$1.33 million (£800,000).

that had been selling and servicing Rovers in Chile since 1993, before Rover said it was terminating the distribution contract in April 1998.

spent on advertising and promotions. A Rover spokesman said the writ had not actually been served on British Cars, saying the action was part of an insurance claim that is being pursued.

whose hopes of stealing the Birmingham International Motor Show with the unveiling of the new Rover 75 executive saloon were dashed when Bernd Fischerrieder, the chairman of BMW, hinted that the Longbridge factory in Birmingham might be closed unless the entire Rover group was made more productive.

flexible working agreement that was agreed between BMW, Rover and the Rover unions last month. The deal is expected to lead to 2,500 job losses through voluntary redundancy but should guarantee the immediate future of Longbridge with the introduction of the new Mini and the likely development of a new saloon car.



Night-time London traffic glides languidly through the sly latticework of Notting Hill's labyrinthine thoroughfares. How's that for a caption?

1996 silver A8
20,000 miles, 61mpg
FOUND
by the
Audi Used Car Locator
0345 698777



FAR EAST 44 Vietnam must focus on road ahead

BUSINESS

TOP BABY 46 Retailers are fighting back with fashions



BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

MONDAY DECEMBER 28 1998

Firms strive to meet PIA deadline

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

PENSION providers and their agents have called in extra staff over the holiday period as they struggle to compensate victims of personal pensions mis-selling before the impending December 31 deadline.



Hewitt: attacked delays

which must be completed on Thursday, concentrates on sorting out compensation for people who were persuaded to buy personal pensions in the 1980s and who are now close to retirement or who have already retired.



Robert Eaton, left, of Chrysler, and Jürgen Schrempf, of Daimler, with Reto Franciotti from the Frankfurt Stock Exchange

Dasa revenue growth boosts talks stance

DASA, the aerospace subsidiary of DaimlerChrysler, saw its revenues rise from \$8.8 billion (£5.3 billion) to \$9.6 billion in the past 12 months, its parent company said yesterday.

with the British company. Lord Simpson is believed to be willing to pursue any of the merger options. GEC last week said it was splitting its defence and civil businesses in an effort to simplify any defence deal.

more than three million Chrysler, Dodge, Plymouth and Jeep cars and trucks and 480,000 commercial vehicles.

Merger set to threaten BTR payout

By CARL MORTISHED

SHAREHOLDERS in BTR will lose a £400 million capital return if they vote in favour of the merger with Siebe on January 13. The decision not to complete a promised £2 billion cash payout to shareholders is likely to increase investor dissatisfaction with the Siebe merger terms.

News Corp poised for Italy TV deal

By RAYMOND SNODDY MEDIA EDITOR

TELECOM ITALIA, the Italian telecommunications group, has reached agreement in principle on an Italian digital television deal with News Corp Europe, the new subsidiary of The News Corporation, the international media group.

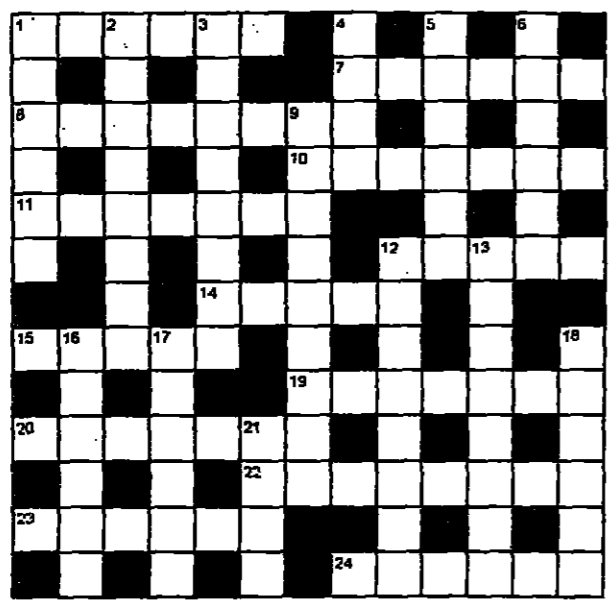
partners in the negotiations". TF1, the French TV company, is expected to take a stake of at least 10 per cent in the venture.

Telecom Italia said it expected the deal to be officially signed at the start of January. The potential deal ran into serious trouble a few weeks ago when an incoming chief executive of Telecom Italia, Franco Bernabe, insisted on reviewing the company's involvement in television.

Signor Bernabe did not want to commit his company to the large potential risk involved. It is believed that he has persuaded the Italian Government that a large News Corp involvement will give a kick-start to the development of digital satellite television in Italy.

News Corp believes that it will be impossible to sell digital TV to the Italians without exclusive football. At the moment Telepiu has individual deals with a number of top clubs. The enlarged Stream plans to make an over-arching bid for all the rights. If that fails then the company will make a lesser bid for the remaining rights and hope to bid for the other rights at a later date.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1599

ACROSS 1 A covering, awning (6) 7 Peers does as well as (6) 8 One full of vitality; one dangerous to touch (4,4) 10 Raise (7) 11 Liked, respected (7) 12 Put on clothes (5) 14 (Year's) edit (5) 15 "Men are - when they woo" - (5) 19 Pawned; promised (to charity) (7) 20 Home city of Agamemnon (7) 22 Obsessive (6) 23 Take (vehicle) at gunpoint (6) 24 Thick outsiders (four) (6)

SOLUTION TO NO 1598 ACROSS: 1 Sanction 5 Chic 9 Shalott 10 Organ 11 Fast 12 Cottage 14 Ay-aye 16 Wind up 19 Giraffe 21 Debt 24 Idiot 25 Bulrush 26 Eggs 27 Green tea

SOLUTION TO CHRISTMAS EVE TIMES TWO JUMBO ACROSS: 1 Scholarship 7 Cold Comfort Farm 15 Leaflet 16 Notebooks 17 Solstice 18 Propelled 19 Irradiate 20 Pizazz 21 Tier 22 Far from the Madding Crowd 26 Enhance 27 Not fair 29 Manifesto 31 Eyebright 33 Omelette 34 Prettier 37 Pesetas 38 Crescendo 40 Egolistic 41 Railcards 43 Non-seeded 44 Sangria 46 Undulant 47 Depulise 49 Voyeurism 51 Crestmalt 53 Digest 54 Heather 57 Knights of the Round Table 60 Mews 62 Pinfold 64 Fiat races 65 Escalator 66 Emotional 67 Exuberant 68 Ontario 69 Silence is golden 70 Brain-teaser

British Gas faces DTI concern over expansion plans

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH GAS may have its hopes of buying electricity power stations scuppered because of concerns at the Department of Trade and Industry about its market dominance.

the deregulating electricity market and is keen to buy stations to support its power needs. It is aiming to sign up more than 30 million customers as regional electricity companies are progressively obliged to relinquish their monopolies.

RAC is first test for Byers

By MARTIN BARROW

STEPHEN BYERS, the new Trade and Industry Secretary, is expected to move quickly to settle the fate of the RAC motoring organisation.

DTI after Mr Mandelson's departure. The RAC takeover by Centand would trigger the UK's biggest windfall payments to date. Some 12,000 full members of the Royal Automobile Club, the legal owner of the breakdown service, would receive £35,000 each, although

ed overwhelmingly in favour of the Centand takeover, some believe that the RAC would fetch a higher price if it once again came on to the market. Observers believe that the MMAC will recommend that the takeover should be cleared by Mr Byers but may attach some conditions to compensate for the loss of competition in the market. The question is whether Centand, which has endured a torrid time in America since its bid for the RAC was announced, may grasp the opportunity to withdraw.

Centand shares have fallen sharply since the acquisitive company, itself the product of a merger of two financial services companies, uncovered accounting irregularities that resulted in hefty financial provisions. Centand abandoned its proposed \$3.1 billion (£1.8 billion) takeover of American Bankers Insurance in October, and Henry Silverman, chief executive, has shelved plans for future deals although he has publicly stated that he intends to go ahead with the RAC purchase.



Members of the RAC at Pall Mall will receive £35,000 each

FSA takes to the road to educate investors

By RICHARD MILES

THE Financial Services Authority is to embark on a "consumer roadshow" next month in a drive to educate the public about the risks and benefits of investing their savings.

In what Mr Davies describes as "a shameless piece of plagiarism", the FSA has borrowed ideas from both US and Australian regulators, which regularly attract more than a thousand people to their roadshows.

much of concrete value from the FSA until late 2000 at earliest. Until the authority's enabling legislation is passed in 18 months, the public will have to continue to deal with the hodge-podge of frontline regulators.

Although the FSA has yet to confirm its remit for consumer complaints, Mr Davies says it is as well to assume that any gripes about investment business conducted before the new watchdog is rooted in law will have to be dealt with under the old system. This means that

the PIA, Imro and SFA will have to be maintained long after the establishment of the single regulator.

The FSA is also behind the scheme with the creation of a single ombudsman to deal with such complaints. Nor has the FSA made much progress in the formation of a single compensation scheme for consumers, although it is envisaged that the Investors' Compensation Scheme, the Policyholders Protection Board and other safety nets, will be brought together.



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